Encounter

200

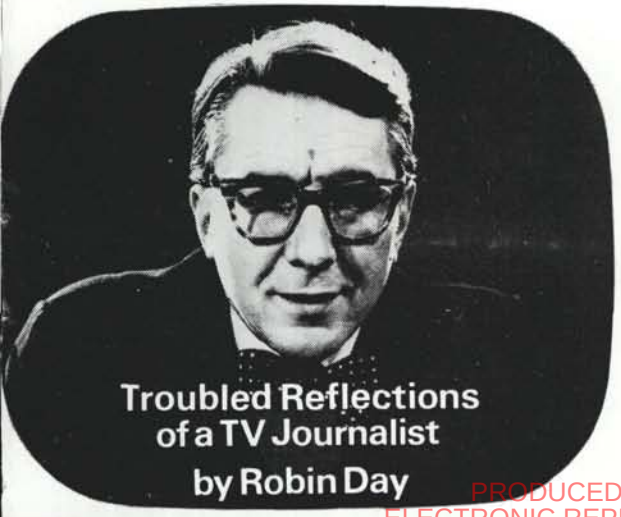
May 1970 7s 35p

A Revolutionary Diary
Natalie Herzen

Translating Verse
Robert Conquest

Passions and Polemics
Raymond Aron

On Literature Arthur Koestler



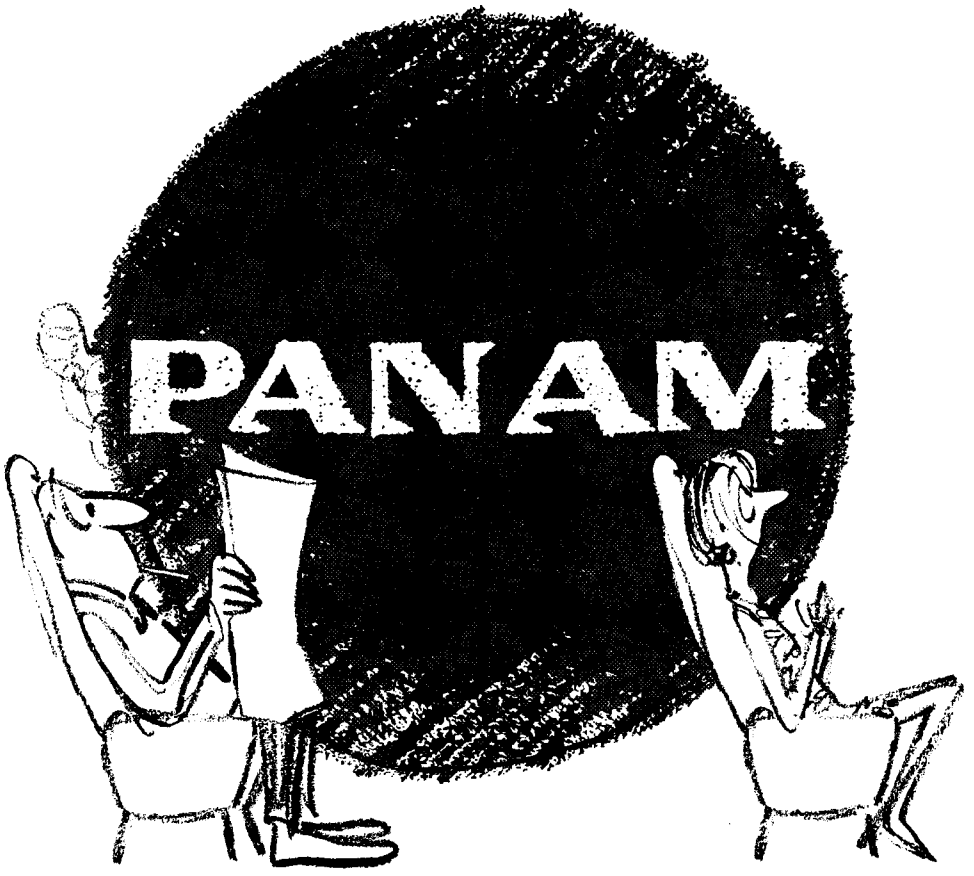
Troubled Reflections of a TV Journalist
by Robin Day

The Abuse of Psychiatry
Dr Henry Miller

Places by Colette

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To smoke or not to smoke. That is the option.



Our new 747 was designed for smokers – and non-smokers. Separately.
In the first place, the air-conditioning system is so efficient that a smoker sitting next to you probably wouldn't bother you a bit. Even so, we've gone one step further. We've set aside special areas as the first no-smoking sections in the air. So when you check in for one of our daily flights to New York (and soon to many other destinations) on our 747, just let us know whether you want the no-smoking section. Or the smoking section.
Pan Am: 193 Piccadilly, W1V 0AD. Tel: 01-734 7292 or 120 Cheapside, London, E.C.2.

Birmingham: 021-236 8731
Manchester: 061-832 3981
Glasgow: 041-248 5744

Pan Am's 747
The plane with all the room in the world.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Encounter

MAY 1970
VOL. XXXIV NO. 5

Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY *and* NIGEL DENNIS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: *Goronwy Rees, Maurice Cranston, Anthony Hartley, John Mander, John Weightman.*
ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Margot Walmsley.* EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: *Bryan Healing.*
GENERAL MANAGER: *Anthony Robinson.* ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: *John Hall.*

Published monthly by Encounter Ltd. at Panton House 25 Haymarket London SW1.
Per copy: UK 7s: USA & Canada $1.25: India Rs. 4.80. Back numbers 7s. ($1.25).
Annual sub.: UK £4.0.0.: USA & Canada $14 (by air $15.50): India Rs. 54: Elsewhere £4.19.0.
Full-time students (state place and course of study): UK 63s.: USA & Canada $10: Elsewhere 63s.
Trade/Subscription Department: Encounter Ltd. 25 Haymarket London S.W.1 (01-839 7667).
US & Canadian Subscriptions: British Publications Inc. 30 East 60th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022.
US newstand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. P.O. Box 6014, Long Island City, N.Y. 11106.
Authorised as Second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for the payment of postage in cash.
Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. © *1970 by Encounter Ltd.*

A DIARY	3	*Natalie Herzen*
THE ABUSE OF PSYCHIATRY	24	*Henry Miller*
PLACES	32	*Colette*
LITERATURE & THE LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS	38	*Arthur Koestler*
COLUMN	46	*R*
MEN & IDEAS		
OF PASSIONS & POLEMICS	49	*Raymond Aron*
POETRY		
WAITING	31	*Dennis Silk*
SENTIMENTS FROM SUMER	37	*Nigel Dennis*
THE ABOMINATION OF MOAB	56	*Robert Conquest*
BOOKS & WRITERS		
MIRABLE ANNALS	65	*Anthony Burgess*
ART, IF YOU LIKE	68	*John Wain*
AN ANTIDOTE TO LÉVI-STRAUSS	71	*Francis Huxley*
PRESS		
TROUBLED REFLECTIONS OF A TELEVISION JOURNALIST	78	*Robin Day*
POINTS OF THE COMPASS		
EGYPTIAN NOTEBOOK	89	*Paul Fussell*
LETTERS	91	
AUTHORS	97	

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My Past & Thoughts

THE MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDER HERZEN

This four-volume edition is a revision by Humphrey Higgens of the Constance Garnett translation. Introduction by Isaiah Berlin.

"A one-man encyclopaedia of all the ideas and passions, anecdotes and epics, revolts and conspiracies which squeaked and thundered across Europe in those years."—Alan Brien in *The Sunday Times*

"One of the great nineteenth century monuments, an essential document as well as a noble piece of literature." Philip Toynbee in *The Observer*

10gns boxed (not sold separately)

In the Wake of the Gods

On the Waterways of Ireland

HUGH MALET

Legends, mirages, monsters, ghosts, tall stories, ruined castles —a mine of fascinating information as well as a spellbinding account of exploring the waterways of Ireland.

42s

MARCEL PROUST

Time Regained

Remembrance of Things Past Volume XII

A new translation by Andreas Mayor

"Quite certain to be read and enjoyed as long as western civilization survives." *The Listener*

63s

CHATTO & WINDUS

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Diary of Natalie Herzen

28 May 1870

EARLY IN FEBRUARY I went to Geneva with Tchorzewski. I was tormented by the thought that we would all be settling in Paris and Florence, but Aga [Ogarev] would be left all alone, as if we had abandoned him.

One morning, a few days after my arrival, I went to see Ogarev. He was still asleep. I came into the drawing-room. Tchorzewski said to me in a whisper:

"Mr. Volkov [Nechayev] is in that room there. Shall I call him in here?"

"Please do," I replied.

I had only a very vague idea of this man, but I had heard one or two things about him, and I was very curious to see him. Tchorzewski opened the dining-room door and showed, or rather, invited in a young man, saying: "Would you like to come in? Natalya Aleksandrovna [Natalie Herzen] is here too."

The appearance of Volkov made a very strange impression on me: everything about him was original, pure Russian, but it was his dark eyes, peering out every so often from behind his large, dark spectacles, that were especially striking. As he came into the room he muttered "Good-morning," thrust his left hand into his pocket and his right hand into the front of his buttoned jacket, and began pacing the room from corner to corner without raising his eyes.

"Have you brought the *Journal de Genève*?" he asked Pan [Tchorzewski].

"No," replied the latter, offended that Volkov should dare ask him, as though it were his duty to bring the journal every day.

"Well, then, bring it later, we must have a look at it," Volkov continued, paying no attention to Pan, who went away after a few minutes.

We were left alone. Volkov continued to pace the room with lowered head. I stood leaning against the mantelpiece, waiting for him to speak. We passed several minutes in silence. Finally, still with lowered gaze and without looking at me, Volkov asked:

"Will you accompany your father's coffin to Nice?"

"No, my brother will go alone with Tchorzewski. I shall return to my sisters in Paris."

And again—silence. Finally I asked:

"Have you been reading the Russian papers? Is there anything new?"

"Are you really interested in Russian affairs?" he asked, and looked at me for the first time,

THAT *these pages from a manuscript diary of Alexander Herzen's daughter should see the light of day just a hundred years after their composition is the least dramatic aspect of the matter. What she records—in a vivid and vibrant style which she evidently inherited from her father—is the topical, and apparently timeless, story of a sensitive, idealistic, and wealthy young woman caught up on the fringes of a revolutionary movement. "Papasha," the influential and adulated Editor of "The Bell" (Kolokol), had just died, and various conspiratorial factions of the Russian émigré and underground opposition began to vie for her name, her collaboration, her funds. Nechayev descended on her, and Bakunin soon followed. Ogarev, that old companion of the Herzen family, was already there. Characters who were later to people the political novels of Dostoevsky and Joseph Conrad walk on to the scene. Altogether it is a document of enthralling interest, and we are pleased to be able to give it its first publication in the English language. The original is in Paris at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Russian text was only recently printed (with a French translation) in the Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique with a long introduction by Professor Michael Confino. The present English translation from the original Russian is by Hilary Sternberg.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with only a darting glance from behind his spectacles, and then lowered his eyes once more to the floor.

"How can one fail to be interested, especially of late. Arrests and interrogations have begun again."

"How should I know if you are interested or not—after all, you must have been abroad for a long time now?"

"Yes, a long time. I was one year old when we left,[1] I do not remember anything. But none the less I am interested in everything that is going on there."

WITH THIS our first meeting ended. Ogarev appeared, and I began talking to him. Judging by Volkov's laconic questions and answers, and by the curt tone of his arrogant mutterings, exactly like some kind of superior officer, I decided that he considered it a complete waste of time to talk with a *baryshnya* [noble lady], and consequently I made no further overtures to him, and paid no attention to him at all, though I did continue to observe his eccentric behaviour and his outbursts. Two or three days after this I spoke to Ogarev of my intention to go to Berne, and from there, to Paris. Volkov was pacing from corner to corner as was his habit, like a bear in a cage.

"Have you mentioned the drawings?" he muttered as he passed Ogarev.

"No, not yet," Ogarev replied slowly, and turned to me, even more slowly, as though preparing to say something.

"What drawings?" I asked in surprise, and, God knows why, the idea flashed through my head that they were going to suggest that I should design or copy a vignette for forging notes.

"It is a long story," Ogarev went on. "I will explain to you later. But you will be gone the day after tomorrow, won't you? How will you do it? Will you have time?"

I had some difficulty in understanding what he meant. I was to draw, first of all, a Russian *muzhik*, but then it appeared that it would be better to draw a group of *muzhiks*. At this point Volkov too began explaining, paying no attention to my remark that all my drawings would be clumsy, unauthentic, and lifeless, because I had never set eyes on a Russian peasant, and I did not know how to draw figures, I only drew heads—which was quite another matter.

"That is immaterial," continued Volkov, "we don't need works of art. The subject and the costumes will be explained to you. You will just do the drawing, and then we'll see if it'll do or not. If it turns out well, you will be doing us a great favour."

At last I understood what they wanted: in the first place, not merely one drawing but a whole series of pictures designed to influence the people, the peasants. Volkov explained the subjects like this:

"In one drawing you will show, for instance, a crowd of *muzhiks*, armed with whatever they can lay hands on, scythes, sticks, and so on. In front, there's a young fellow who's lost his hat. He's straining to rush over to one side, pointing at the soldiers standing there. But he's stopped by a priest who is beating him over the head with his cross. Do you understand?"

"I understand. But the task is a difficult one, it is too much for me. I am very sorry."

"It's no use giving up before you have tried; start with one figure, and then we'll see. For example, a gentleman-landowner, as they used to be—fat, rich, sprawling drunkenly on a couch, and then a landowner as they look nowadays—thin, dressed in rags."

"Now *that* I *could* do."

"Then, if that turns out well, we want you to draw some *muzhiks*; for example, on one page—what the *muzhiks* are doing, and on another—what they ought to be doing."

"And what do you think they ought to be doing?" I asked.

After a moment's silence he replied: "Well, for example, some *muzhiks* steal up to the master's house and set fire to it."

"Mercy on us, what are you thinking of?" I exclaimed. "I would not draw that for anything, even if I could. One shouldn't teach the *muzhiks* to kill or set fire to things. The people are cruel enough when they rise up, they should be restrained, not incited...."

An ironic smile appeared on Volkov's face, and, still pacing up and down, he shouted to Ogarev, who was sitting in the dining-room: "Hey, listen what 'they' say here! They refuse to draw, because, you see, it's contrary to their way of thinking to teach *muzhiks* to set fire to things."

Ogarev laughed and said nothing. We argued a little longer. I refused to draw groups, saying

[1] Actually a little older. Natalie was born on 13 December 1844, and the Herzen family left Russia in January 1847.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that I would try and do single *muzhiks* or figures.

OGAREV INSISTED that I should come back from Berne a little sooner, and he would explain to me and tell me many more things. Sasha [Alexander Herzen *fils*], on the contrary, was eager to leave for Paris, and asked, or advised me to stay with Masha as long as possible.

"I hope that you will then find Ogarev on his own. You know what it's like now—one cannot have a real talk with him, there is always someone else there. But did you hear how Zamperini gave himself away yesterday evening? I was very surprised, for such a hardened conspirator. We had hardly greeted each other, when he said to me with a mysterious air, indicating Volkov with a movement of his thumb over his shoulder: 'I have come'—he said—'about this matter, you understand,

Bakunin & Nechayev: A Manifesto

PARAGRAPH 1. *The revolutionary is a lost man; he has no interests of his own, no cause of his own, no feelings, no habits, no belongings; he does not even have a name. Everything in him is absorbed by a single, exclusive interest, a single thought, a single passion—the revolution.*

PARAGRAPH 2. *In the very depths of his being, not just in words but in deeds, he has broken every tie with the civil order, with the educated world and all laws, conventions and generally accepted conditions, and with the ethics of this world. He will be an implacable enemy of this world, and if he continues to live in it, that will only be so as to destroy it the more effectively.*

PARAGRAPH 3. *The revolutionary despises all doctrinism. He has rejected the science of the world, leaving it to the next generation; he knows only one science, that of destruction.*

PARAGRAPH 4. *He despises public opinion; he despises and hates the existing social ethic in all its demands and expressions; for him, everything that allows the triumph of the revolution is moral, and everything that stands in its way is immoral.*

PARAGRAPH 5. *The revolutionary is a lost man; with no pity for the State and for the privileged and educated world in general, he must himself expect no pity. Every day he must be prepared for death. He must be prepared to bear torture.*

PARAGRAPH 6. *Hard with himself, he must be hard towards others. All the tender feelings of family life, of friendship, love, gratitude and even honour must be stifled in him by a single cold passion for the revolutionary cause. For him there is only one pleasure, one consolation, one reward, and one satisfaction—the success of the revolution. Day and night he must have one single thought, one single purpose: merciless destruction. With this aim in view, tirelessly and in cold blood, he must always be prepared to die and to kill with his own hands anyone who stands in the way of achieving it.*

PARAGRAPH 7. *The character of the true revolutionary has no place for any romanticism, sentimentality, enthusiasm or seduction. Nor has it any place for private hatred or revenge. This revolutionary passion which in him becomes a daily, hourly passion, must be combined with cold calculation. Always and everywhere he must become not what his own personal inclination would have him become, but what the general interest of the revolution demands.*

*

PARAGRAPH 23. *By "popular revolution" our association does not mean a regulated movement on the classical Western pattern, which is always kept in check by respect for property, traditions and those social structures called "civilisation" and "morality"—a movement which until now has always confined itself to destroying one kind of political structure merely to replace it with another by tending to create the so-called "revolutionary State." The only revolution that can save the people is one that destroys every established object root and branch, that annihilates all State traditions, orders and classes in Russia....*

PARAGRAPH 25. *To do this we must draw close to the people; we must ally ourselves mainly with those elements of the people's life which ever since the foundation of the State of Moscow have never given up protesting, not just in words but in deeds, against anything directly or indirectly tied to the State; against the nobility, the bureaucracy, the priests, against the world of guilds and against the kulaks. We must ally ourselves with the doughty world of brigands, who in Russia are the only real revolutionaries.*

PARAGRAPH 26. *All our organisation, all our conspiracy, all our purpose consists in this: to regroup this world of brigands into an invincible and omni-destructive force.*

"The Revolutionary Catechism" (1869)
by *Bakunin and Nechayev*
in: FRANCO VENTURI, *Roots of Revolution* (1960).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but I have not yet got..., it's not easy; I have already delivered three, and I am trying for the fourth!' I, of course, knew nothing of the matter, but I felt sorry for the old man, I thought how ashamed and annoyed he would be if he realised that he had given away a secret, so I replied, also with a mysterious air: 'Yes, yes, I understand—it's no joke.' Ah, how ridiculous and useless all these carryings-on are! What a pity that the young man is wasting his energy."

"The young man is doubtless very energetic, but his views on everything are one-sided," I remarked.

"Yes," replied Sasha, "but what can you do? From his point of view he is right: without that narrowness one cannot do anything. And if he did dispatch that *agent provocateur*[2] to a better place, you can only praise him for it."

"Of course," I agreed. "How interesting it would be to know what they are really up to over there in Russia. Was there a conspiracy or not?"

I really was very interested. I had already questioned Ogarev several times, and asked him to explain to me what their cause was, why Papasha [Alexander Herzen] had separated from them and why he did not believe in them or sympathise with them.[3]

Ogarev: "Papasha had been growing more and more detached, keeping himself apart for a long time, and consequently there was much that he simply did not know. He could not judge the present position of young people in Russia, or what they are doing."

Myself: "Do you believe that they have organised a group which has great influence?"

Ogarev: "Volkov's escape, and the fact that he was freed by his comrades[4]—that alone proves that they are strong. But anyway, even if there were only a few of them, say fifty, twenty, or ten, I would still be with them, because I believe their cause to be a just and sacred one."

I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND more clearly what exactly this "cause" and this "group" were and so I was impatient to be away from Berne. I stayed there for only two days, and on the third day I returned [to Geneva] and once more began questioning Ogarev.

I was not satisfied by his answers. He gave the impression that he knew a great deal but could not or must not speak, and so I began to question Volkov and even had lengthy conversations with him about the workers in general, the "bourgeois," the exploiters and the "parasites." But I became none the clearer on the subject of the Russian cause. I understood one thing only, and that was that he was preaching the most terrible hypocrisy, with his repeated assertions that "the end justifies the means."

"Mercy on us," I could not help exclaiming, "but that is pure Jesuitism!"

"Yes, of course it is," answered Volkov, "and the Jesuits were most intelligent and ingenious people. There has never existed another society like theirs. One should just take all their rules from beginning to end and act according to them—changing the aim, of course."

This declaration surprised and frightened me. How can one work with such people, I thought. The more Volkov developed the idea of the necessity of such a system, and launched into details such as, for instance, the need for occasional eavesdropping, opening other people's letters, lying, and so on, the more amazed I grew that Ogarev could agree with this kind of activity. When I questioned him about it, he merely answered:

"There are times when it is necessary to lie."

---

[2] The allusion is to the murder of the student Ivanov, for which Nechayev was subsequently arrested, tried, and sentenced.

[3] In his letters to Bakunin, written in 1869 under the title *To an Old Comrade* (and provocatively introduced by a Bentham motto on the relations of ends and means), Herzen broke with Bakunin over such fundamental questions as violence or reform, fanaticism or reasonableness, revolution or evolution.

"The term 'gradual progress,'" Herzen wrote, "holds no terrors for me, discredited though it is by the vacillations and mistakes of diverse reformers. 'Gradual progress,' like continuity, is an inalienable part of every process...." He defended the principle of "compromise" as against "a headlong dash forward." He warned Bakunin against the notion of establishing "the new order, the new form of emancipation by resorting to a massacre," of "liberation by means of the guillotine."

Herzen tried to put his finger on the difference that had come to divide them—"You tear along, as before, filled with passion of destruction which you take for creative passion.... I do not believe in the former revolutionary paths.... I do not believe that people who prefer destruction and brute force to evolution and amicable agreements are really serious...." See: Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works* (Moscow, 1956), pp. 576–595.

[4] This was, of course, only the legend disseminated by Nechayev himself that he had escaped from the Peter and Paul fortress.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"But eavesdropping, opening other people's letters, and the rest?"

"But in practice one never has to do that," was his ingenuous reply.

From all the conversations I could draw the conclusion that their aim was good, that they were striving to change the existing order, and that they wanted to begin by overthrowing or destroying the power of the Russian government—but as for the means! . . .

TWO DAYS BEFORE my departure for Paris, Volkov began to put all manner of questions to me concerning myself personally, and my occupations, and finally asked why I was going to Paris and what I would do there.

"I do not know myself yet," I replied.

"That's bad," he muttered.

"While I am staying with Natalya Alekseyevna and Liza I shall be looking after Liza, and helping Natalya Alekseyevna copy out and translate *Papasha's* manuscripts. But what after that, I do not know."

"That's bad. But you say you are looking for something to do, and that you would even be prepared to help us."

"Of course, if I can be of any help. But how, what is there to do?"

"There is no end of things to do, all around you. You only have to decide that you seriously want to help, and you will find them, and discover what they are. For instance, even here you could be of so much help to Ogarev."

"In what way exactly?"

"Come here this evening and I will explain. But you really ought to move here to Geneva."

"It is too late now. There will certainly be a flat rented in Paris by now. But still, I will see. If I thought that I would really find something to do here, then of course I would move here."

I WENT BACK in the evening although my head ached terribly. Ogarev had been drinking and was playing the piano. Volkov sat down beside me and began in a mysterious whisper to tell me that there existed in Russia a great and powerful secret society, that he was taking the risk of talking to me of it although he was hardly acquainted with me, because I had inspired his trust, and he was relying on me not to speak of it to anyone.

"You know the aim of the society. So now you only have to say if you consider yourself one of us."

"What do you mean? Do I belong to your society? Of course not!"

"That is not what I meant. To put it briefly, do you wish to remain as you are, to live in peace as a fashionable society lady, or do you wish to become one of us, like those strong women you find in Russia nowadays, whom we consider our sisters?"

Myself: "In other words, you are asking me if I wish to belong to your society? I cannot answer that. After all, I know too little about it as yet."

Volkov: "Just make up your mind about one thing: are you closer to the bourgeois parasites who do not wish to change anything, or to us, who wish to transform everything?"

Myself: "To you, of course; that is to say, I sympathise with your aim, but I cannot approve of your means. . . ."

Volkov: "That is all I wanted to know. You agree with our aim, and that means you are one of us. But you must prove it in practice, you must work and help us."

Myself: "But if you will allow me, you say that I am one of *you*. I say that I agree with your aim, and I am willing to help, but I wish to know the rules of your society before I can consider myself a member, and what I shall have to do."

"We do not need any rules except silence. In Russia it is a different matter. Over there I would not have decided to talk openly with you so soon. We do not need any signatures or rules—what use are they? A man who does not want to do anything will not do anything even if he has signed, and a man who sincerely wishes to work will work without signing. What is the use of unnecessary formalities?"

"But what are you proposing that I should do?"

"I will explain now. You are aware that over there of late there have been arrests and all kinds of dirty tricks. Also people have started escaping from prisons and fortresses, and when they flee abroad and finally get here they find nothing. They stop in Germany, and there they are handed over again to the Russian government. We must without fail set up some kind of *centre*, here abroad, which would be in touch with all Russians who are scattered outside Russia—so that an escapee would know where to turn and would not come to grief. The Committee of our group thinks that the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most convenient place for setting up this centre would be Switzerland, more exactly, in Geneva —even at Ogarev's place, for example, since he is known and respected. But Ogarev is old, and often unwell, or in the condition in which you see him this evening. He simply must have a young, clear-headed person to help him and prompt his memory. It would be best and easiest for you to take charge of that. Without such a person, there will be no end of trouble. I have to go away in a day or two, and I am simply terrified at the idea of leaving him alone. For example, things like this happen: a few days ago a most important telegram arrived with a message that one of 'our men' had fled. That telegram should have been read at once, and a second telegram sent as quickly as possible somewhere else to inform them of what was happening. Well, Ogarev opened it and fell asleep in his chair with the telegram in his hands just as he was about to read it. Fortunately I arrived in time and managed to send off a despatch to the right place, or God knows how many people would have perished. You can see that we simply must have a *loyal*, clear-headed person who would gradually take over everything. In other words, a person who would receive all the correspondence, answer it promptly, send it on, and such like. If you would take charge of this, you would be doing us a

Dostoevsky . . . .

Dostoevsky first learned of Nechayev in December 1869, probably in the reading room of the Dresden Library, hunched over one of those Russian newspapers which he pursued and read all over Europe. Nechayev, the conspiracy, the murder of Ivanov, and the trial of the Nechayevists—all these had an enormous impact on Dostoevsky, dredging up all his fears for the future of Russia, reinforcing his conviction that the godless liberalism that had betrayed him in the '40s led to destruction and chaos, and justifying his irrational and ungenerous disgust with Belinsky. The Nechayev case moved Dostoevsky toward what was contemporary, historical, and journalistic, and the change—his interest in contemporary events notwithstanding—went against the grain of his deepest urgings. He wanted at this time to immerse himself in "The Life of a Great Sinner," its five books, and its Miltonic imaginings of battles between faith and unfaith, fall and regeneration. . . .

He was not interested in the historical Nechayev, as he himself stated, but only in what Nechayev represented. He was interested in the type and not the individual, in the logic of history and not the empirical event:

> *"I do not know Nechayev, or Ivanov, or the circumstances of this murder [he wrote]. Even if I knew, I would not use them. I take only the complete act. My imagination can in the highest degree differ from what actually happened, and my Peter Verkhovensky can in no way resemble Nechayev; still, I believe that my imagination has created that person, that type, which corresponds to the crime."*

Unlike Zola, Dostoevsky does not have to know the buttons on Nechayev's shirt, or the occupation of Nechayev's father, or the habits of his mother. He knows only the "accomplished fact," and the logic of human nature that corresponds to that accomplished fact. In a century in which Balzac catalogued the mores of Parisians, Zola of provincials, Dickens of aspiring gentlemen, and Norris of robber barons, it is startling to hear what sounds like a tenet from French classical criticism: not the individual, but the type. But the type for Dostoevsky is not what usage and the age have decreed—rather what the imagination had conceived. Journalism confirmed, but it did not determine. . . .

Dostoevsky had very little to add to the real-life Nechayev. He was as fantastic as anything the imagination could invent or discover. At the age of sixteen he was illiterate; by nineteen he was a teacher of religion; by twenty-one he was one of a group of protesting St. Petersburg students; and by twenty-one and a half he was Bakunin's intimate. Five months after he arrived in Europe in early 1869 he had convinced much of the émigré revolutionary establishment that Russia was ripe for revolution and a new order, and had enlisted their aid to effect that revolution by giving his unqualified support. In the early fall of 1869 he appeared in Moscow as Bakunin's official representative and the head of a fictitious international revolutionary committee.

As the organiser of a "network" of committees of five, Nechayev was always arrogant and unbending; he insisted on total obedience in the name of the "cause." Ivanov, a student at the Petrovsk Agricultural Academy, had at meetings of the central committee of five consistently opposed him, refused to obey an order of Nechayev's and threatened to start a rival group. Nechayev managed to convince the other members of the committee that Ivanov was going to inform on them. Ivanov was lured to a distant part of the Academy park on the pretext of unearthing a printing press. There he was set upon by Nechayev and the others,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

great service. You see, it is a case of human lives being lost over there to no purpose, all because of Ogarev's carelessness."

The situation as he described it to me was indeed extremely serious. I believed that something really was going on in Russia, that everything was in ferment, that a storm was brewing and that something was being prepared for the nineteenth of February 1870.[5] I fell to thinking, weighing up all the circumstances and trying to find a way of arranging my move, after I had in Paris been so firmly *against* moving to Geneva. Moreover, the memory of my illness came back to me, and I was terrified at the thought that I would have to participate in a secret society. I recalled how I had been tormented by all kinds of conspiracies, visions, etc., during my illness. Volkov cut short my reflections with the question:

"You can see the necessity for coming here, even if only for a short time, a few weeks or two or three months, in a word, while things are so hot over there. You have nothing to do in Paris, whereas here you will be tremendously useful. Make up your mind, and we will find

[5] Nechayev had been assuring everybody (including Natalie Herzen and Bakunin) that the revolution would break out in Russia on the anniversary of the liberation of the serfs.

. . . . & *Nechayev*

brutally beaten, strangled and finally—because of the furious struggle—shot in the back of the neck by Nechayev. His body was weighed down with bricks and dropped into a pond.

THE POLICE *quickly traced the murder to Nechayev, but only in a way that sent a chill through their hearts and mystery and terror into their consciousness. The Third Section had been investigating the appearance of mysterious proclamations and an upsurge of student disturbances; in a raid on a bookstore they found, along with the proclamations, a notebook of addresses, a copy of "The Catechism of a Revolutionary" in cipher, data calling for a revolution on 19 February 1870, and plans for the assassination of the highest dignitaries. Among the addresses, they found the name of Ivanov. Although arrest after arrest was made, the police were unable to penetrate further than the surface. No one seemed to know where the committee was, how large it was, what its organization was. The committee seemed omnipresent and yet invisible; the plans for revolution seemed detailed and imminent, yet undiscoverable. But all names led to Nechayev.*

LIKE "PETER VERKHOVENSKY," *Nechayev had managed to raise the fantasies and vagaries of his mind to substantial fact in the minds of his followers and the minds of the police, and had managed to provoke in those followers, by fear and bullying, grudging dedication to a cause no one quite understood. But one fact was real—the murder of Ivanov—and the witnesses who confessed to Nechayev's part in the murder were real. The Tsarist government was determined to bring Nechayev to trial for the murder, but he had quickly slipped out of the country after the murder was discovered, leaving his comrades to shift for themselves. And there, undismayed by the murder, his perfidy, exile, and even the fact that the Tsarist government had alerted its embassies and enjoined the help of friendly powers in the search for him, Nechayev set to work with indefatigable energy to disseminate the "cause" and himself.*

Most European countries did not permit the extradition of political refugees but did permit the extradition of common criminals, and it was as common criminal that the Tsarist government persuaded the European powers to help in the search for Nechayev. He was finally arrested near Zürich, Switzerland, in the fall of 1872, extradited to Russia (after some liberal protests), quickly tried, and quickly sentenced to twenty years hard labour in Siberia. He never reached Siberia, however, because the government had no intention of sending him where he could influence other political prisoners. He was sent instead to the Alexei-Ravelin in St. Petersburg. There he continued to invoke fantasmal worlds, convincing his guards and his keepers that invisible threads tied him to every tremor that touched the empire. Shortly before his unrepentant death in 1882, he had extensive and intimate contacts with members of "The People's Will" and their successful attempt on the Tsar's life in 1881.

SCORNED *by every liberal group in the nineteenth century for his unabashed cynicism, he nevertheless continued to live in reputation long after his death. The Soviets early in their post-revolutionary theorising seemed ready to accept him as a true predecessor, before the terror of what they were about to admit sent them rushing for qualification, evasion, and silence. Nechayev and the spirit of Nechayevism were more powerful and enduring than his contemporaries knew. Only Nechayev, and Dostoevsky, believed in that power.*

Dostoevsky's Notebooks for "The Possessed"
(from the introduction by Edward Wasiolek, University of Chicago Press, 1968)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you a room here at Ogarev's place. Or . . . but perhaps you are rather spoilt on account of . . . well, the creature comforts . . . ?"

"Oh no, I am accustomed to anything, and I pay little attention to comfort!"

"So much the better," he continued, "Then we can simply rent a room for you."

"What do you mean? . . . I shall not be coming alone. One of my family will be with me. After all, I have only just recovered, they will not allow me to leave on my own."

"What for? That is quite unnecessary! No, you must arrange it so that you come alone. We should not involve other people in this—they would only be a hindrance. What I have said to you must remain between ourselves. Well, when will you be back in Geneva? Remember that every day is precious. In three or four days?"

Myself: "How can I? It is impossible to arrange everything so soon. In two or three weeks—certainly not before."

Volkov: "No, two weeks at the most, but I hope it will be sooner. Things are already very bad indeed here. Have you decided?"

Myself: "I cannot promise for certain. I will see what has been arranged in Paris and how things are. I shall do what I can."

"No, you must arrange it without fail! You yourself can see and understand how important it is, what terrible consequences can follow from the slightest negligence. I am counting on you. In the meantime I will give you one or two commissions for Paris. Come and see me early tomorrow morning and I will explain to you what you have to do."

THE NEXT DAY he gave me several letters to take for his acquaintances in Paris, and added a letter of recommendation which I was to give to Mr. ———, and in which he had written that this gentleman was to carry out all my commissions.

"It would be advisable if you did *not* meet him at your house."

He asked me to write as soon as possible and describe to him in detail what the attitude of my family was to my desire to move. "How will you explain it to them? No one must know yet that you are in touch with us. Please do not speak of it even to Ogarev."

"Well, I can explain it by saying that I wish to stay a while with Ogarev. As it happens, I had already written that, even before our conversations, because I would be truly grieved to leave him on his own. Natalya Alekseyevna wrote in reply that she did not mind, and that if we could be useful in any way at all (this was a reference to his habit of drinking too much) then she was willing to move here."

"It would be advisable for you to come alone. You have no need of a nanny. If I am not here, we can arrange a meeting, a rendezvous somewhere along the way. But that can be done by letter."

"That would be difficult to arrange. I hope it will not be necessary."

"I will give you the address in any case, and explain where we could arrange to meet."

Whereupon he named the town of N. [probably Neuchâtel] and said that a certain Mr. ——— knew him by the name of *S.*, and that when I arrived I was to say that I had come on behalf of *Narodnaya Rasprava* [*People's Justice*].

I RETURNED TO PARIS, carried out the commissions promptly, and almost fell into a *"souricière"* laid in the offices of *La Marseillaise* since I had a commission for the editors there. It was pure chance that I did not fall into the trap. I discovered later that all the editors had been arrested. I wrote to Ogarev at once.

Only a day or two afterwards, I received a letter from Volkov with a lengthy dissertation on "parasitism," and on the fact that for twenty-five years I had been living aimlessly, without benefiting others, and so on. In short—a summary of our conversations and arguments. At the end he asked me to abandon these "ephemeral intimacies" and this "sentimentality," to shake off the continual surveillance and go alone to Geneva.

I replied that to arrange all that was more difficult than he supposed, because the things he called ephemeral and sentimental were in my eyes very important and serious. And that he was incapable of understanding my relationships with other people because he had most certainly been living and working alone for a long time now without caring about others. Ogarev also wrote to me, asking if I would come and help him.

By my second letter I was refusing to go, believing that it would cause too much alarm and distress for my family, who were beginning to suspect something. I added that to move would be unreasonable, since I could not tell lies, and neither my explanations nor my silence

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would satisfy them. And indeed, the endless conversations and argument with N.A. and with Sasha distressed me terribly. I could see that they feared for my health, and I realised that they had good reason, for I was indeed in a state of terrible agitation. They had noticed that I was receiving letters in an unfamiliar hand, and imagined that these were from Bakunin.

Sasha had completed his business with the lawyer, and I had signed all the necessary papers; Olga too. He had no more matters to attend to in Paris, and moreover, he was in great haste to see Terezina. He and Tchorzewski undertook to accompany the coffin as far as Nice and arrange everything there. On the eve of their departure we had yet another long conversation. Sasha tried to prove to me the absurdity of my desire to go to Geneva, saying that he regarded it as an after-effect of my illness.

"Look, judge for yourself," he said. "In what way can you help Ogarev, since you say it is to help him that you are going? If you think you can influence his drinking habits, that is ridiculous. You will achieve nothing."

Myself: "Aga wrote in his last letter that I could help him with some things, and be useful."

Sasha: "That is nonsense too! You know that at the moment he is incapable of thinking for himself. He is completely under the influence of those around him. I can well believe that he is very eager for you to stay with him, but even in asking you to come, he is under the influence of other people who are simply after your money. Give up the idea! You will find no work to do there."

Myself: "I cannot do that. I shall see there what there is to do, and who is right."

Sasha: "In any case there is no need for you to be in such a hurry," went on poor Sasha, driven beyond his patience but trying not to argue too heatedly with me, fearing a possible recurrence of my illness. "Why do you have to go on ahead? Wait till the end of the month and think it over properly, and if you have not changed your mind, go with Natalya. But just now, let me leave with my mind at rest. Promise me that you will not go alone. Think how it pains me to go now and leave you in this strange, unnaturally agitated state."

It grieved me to see how I was distressing him and the others; I could not bear it and promised that I would not go without Natalya, and that I would wait until the end of February.

"God be praised," said Sasha, giving a sigh of relief. "But what an effort it cost to achieve that! It is very late. Let's go to bed!"

At this point Pan joined in: "We can rely on Natalya Aleksandrovna's word, and we know that. Therefore we know that *until the end of the month* we can set our minds at rest. Natalya Alekseyevna will certainly not think of leaving before the first of March."

As soon as Tchorzewski began speaking, I started taking my leave, kissed Sasha, and went without replying to Tchorzewski's remark.

A day or two after their departure I received the following letter from Volkov. [The letter is not included in the journal and is probably lost.]

It may be, indeed it is very likely that everything he said and wrote to me had had such a violent effect on me because I was still under the influence of the phantoms of my sick mind. I could not help seeking a resemblance between my present circumstances and my hallucinations, and I saw them as some kind of prophecy. Sasha and Pan left.

I WAS TREMENDOUSLY AGITATED by Volkov's letter. The thought even occurred to me that if this situation continued, I would very likely become confused again and fall ill. It was essential to come to a decision, and so I began to pack my things. Natalya noticed everything and grew more and more worried for me. At the same time everyone was afraid to oppose me, and avoided doing so. However, seeing that I was packing, Natalya asked me what I was doing: had I decided to leave, and when? She was not at all pleased by my appearance. Upon learning that I had decided to leave in two days, she said quite calmly that she would be ready too, and that she preferred to waste the money she had paid in advance for my accommodation, rather than let me leave alone. And indeed, two days later we left. Natalya telegraphed to Sasha and Tchorzewski asking them to go directly to Geneva without making a useless detour to Paris. We arrived at Geneva tired, both suffering from headaches, and in a wretched state. Nevertheless I went to see Aga and find out if there was anything new, and *how exactly* I might help him.

He was overjoyed at our arrival, and said that I could indeed be of great assistance to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him, and he would tell me before long what I should do.

Next day he gave me a letter from Bakunin *"to the two Natashas,"* in which Bakunin wrote that he offered his condolences to us but that one should not lose heart, especially when one could still be of use to others and when there was work waiting for us as important and sacred as that which was being done in Russia and for Russia. When I had finished reading it, Ogarev asked: "What do you think, what will be Natalya's attitude to this?"

"You know her views," I answered, "and you know that she has no sympathy at all for your activities and believes that no good will come of them. This letter will have no influence whatsoever on her."

"In that case it would be best to give it back to me. Bakunin and I have been having a real correspondence about you. Here, have a look at his last letter—a whole article, and all about you."

Myself: "What can he write about me? He hardly knows me, what is he going on about?

Aga: "He's heard you were ill. We were speaking of you—I agree with him that you need something to occupy yourself. Well, here you are, and we can find you work to do. Those others, Natalya and Sasha, think that I am ruining you, that work is harmful for you. But I am convinced of the contrary. In that empty, aimless, bourgeois milieu you will most certainly go out of your mind again. I do not want to ruin you—I want to save you. . . ."

I was struck by his irritated, intolerant tone. I began defending Natalya and Sasha and trying to prove to him that they had never wanted me to lead an aimless life, that it was natural that they should be afraid of upsetting me now, knowing that all the doctors had advised me to rest.

A DAY OR TWO LATER Ogarev showed me a letter from Volkov in which the latter wrote that he simply must have some highly important papers sent to him, and added: "I hope Tata is there with you—she will be of great help to you. Send her to me with the papers. She is the only person I trust now."

"Well, will you take this on?" said Ogarev after a pause. "Otherwise I really do not know how we can do it. They say that it is impossible to send anything by post."

This proposal put me in a quandary. I imagined Natalya's fright and displeasure, for I had heard her once discussing matters with Sasha, and saying: "Let us hope that Bakunin does not use her as a courier. That would be the most dangerous of all, God knows what would happen to her. In her exalted condition she would be ready to go to Russia."

I could see that it was the first step towards making me a courier. I thought, "To go, not knowing who my companions would be, to a rendezvous with an assassin." But this thought too passed through my mind: "He killed a spy though, and that was a good thing. What energy he has, he is a fanatic. He does indeed see nothing except his goal." Besides, I thought he would soon have to go to Russia. I had read some of the leaflets, and I was at a loss to understand how such dreadful things could be printed. I very much wished to discuss this with him. Indeed, there were many things I wanted to understand.

I hesitated and hesitated—then I decided to go. Poor Aga was at once overjoyed and frightened: "Will your health not suffer? You were not feeling very well after your arrival. Are you sure that it will not do you any harm?" I reassured him and then began wondering how I could explain things so that Natalya was as little worried as possible and did not frighten Sasha, and so that Tchorzewski did not think of checking my story.

Although it was repugnant to me to tell Natalya an untruth, I made myself do it and told her that I was going to Berne, and that she was not to worry because I would be staying with Masha.

I could see that the news was extremely unpleasant for her, but she merely said: "You are not a child, and I have no right to interfere in your affairs. But you do realise that you will be causing Sasha great distress—it was travelling he feared most for you. If only you would just take Tchorzewski with you. . . ."

"I cannot."

"Well then, do as you think best. You know that I too will be terribly worried. When will you return?"

"The day after tomorrow, and I will write to you."

Tchorzewski was even more horrified, and insisted on accompanying me if only to the station. I did not tell him which train I was travelling on, and so set off on my own with a small bag and a bundle of papers. . . .

Natalya stood at the window and worriedly watched me climb into the coach.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Take care," she shouted after me, "and look after yourself!"

But I thought it all so strange and amusing. I had become a real little conspirator!

I REACHED [Neuchâtel] without the least trouble. There I had to find a Mr. G[uillaume]. I had never been in N[euchâtel] before; the railway station is outside the town; I did not know the way and I did not wish to ask anyone. I saw that most of the passengers were setting off down a fairly wide road and I followed them. Some of them looked at me in surprise; evidently I stood out as a foreigner. I asked an old woman in a shop where *la rue S.* was, and I found M. Guillaume with no difficulty. He opened the door to me himself and looked at me suspiciously—might I not be a spy? I asked him if he could tell me where to find Volkov.

"I know him," he replied, "but I do not know where he is at the moment. Do you know him personally?"

Then I remembered the prearranged words and said hastily:

"Of course I know him, and I have come on behalf of *Narodnaya Rasprava*."

He smiled and exclaimed: "Yes, yes, you are the one, then. I know, they have been expecting you for a long time. I was warned two or three weeks ago that you would be passing through. You will have to take the train a little further yet."

"But will I arrive this evening?"

"Of course you will. It will be dark, but do not worry, everything will be arranged, you will be met at the station. But if you would just carry this white handkerchief in your right hand—there, like that—so that they know you are indeed the person they are to accompany. And now allow me to escort you to the station and carry your bag. Did you really come all alone and find me on your own?"

We set off together for the station, but this time by another road, a very secluded way. He remarked that he was doing this as a precaution, since his company could be compromising, and he had many enemies in Neuchâtel.

"Of course I came alone. What is surprising about that? And I found you on my own despite the fact that I have never been here before. Why are you astonished?"

"Truly I would never have guessed that you were a conspirator."

I laughed.

"If I had been instructed to find you in a crowd, it would never have occurred to me that you were the one they were expecting. Are you Russian?"

"Yes, Russian. What is the matter, do you think I am too young?"

"Young, yes. But also—we already have certain ideas about 'Nihilist women,' and your appearance, *tout votre apparition, votre extérieur du moins*, does not correspond in the least. One inevitably thinks of a certain carelessness in the dress, hair cropped short, spectacles, and so on. And in addition, I know what our acquaintance and some of his comrades look like.... Very strange indeed," he added after a minute's silence.

"So you have had occasion to meet Nihilist women? I have much sympathy with them and even consider *myself* a Nihilist, as *I* understand the word. But I consider these outward forms and this originality quite superfluous and ridiculous."

WE REACHED THE STATION and found we would have to wait about half an hour. He was amazed that I had not eaten, and insisted that I have something in the buffet. He asked me a few questions, timidly, fearing any indiscretion, and repeated several times:

"How stupid, how annoying it is that neither you nor I was told anything. I can see we have many common acquaintances. For instance, do you know this handwriting?"—I recognised it at once.—"How strange! I know them all, you see, the whole circle. And I played a most active part in the Princess O[bolenskaya] affair."

"What's to be done! But if you were not told to speak to me, then do not speak. And I must warn you that as far as *your* affairs are concerned, I know very little, to be more precise—nothing."

He asked me also if I needed any money. I refused, of course. The train came in, he saw me to my seat and then went off to send a telegram.

IT WAS ALREADY quite dark when I reached the little station at L[ocle]. I held the white handkerchief in my right hand, as I had been told, feeling very foolish. I had hardly given in my ticket and taken two or three steps in the snow along a muddy road, when a tall figure approached me and muttered something. I did not understand anything, but thought that no one would have approached me in this way ex-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cept the person who had been instructed to do so, and so I followed him. A few minutes later a second man joined us. Wishing to start a conversation somehow, they began apologising for the road being so bad, for there being so much snow, and so on. Soon we came to a small house and went up a steep wooden staircase to the attic. I was shown into a small, neatly kept room; a little woman with a slight stoop began fussing over me, taking my cloak and asking if there was anything I needed, etc. "*Merci*, I have no need of anything. Where is the young man?"

I was taken into another room, small, low-roofed and lit by a single tallow candle. Volkov was seated at a large desk surrounded by a pile of letters and various papers. He greeted me laconically: "How do you do? Have you brought them? Give them to me!"

"Here you are." And I gave him the papers.

He began reading them at once and it was only after six or seven minutes that he looked up at me and said:

"Surely you must be tired? Give me your hat. I expect you are hungry?"

"I would be glad to have some tea."

I was beginning to answer almost as laconically as he, but without being impolite. The little hunchbacked woman laid the table, brought in coffee, honey, jam, an enormous loaf of bread, etc., all the time scrutinising me from head to foot. (Then she bustled around over by the bed, changing the linen; I could not help feeling uneasy at the thought of having to sleep with her.) I sat there eating and thinking: "Whatever possessed me to do something like this!"

We began talking, debating and arguing. His attitude to all the printed leaflets was that their contents were designed merely to frighten people. At one o'clock he saw that I was extremely tired and said:

"Why don't you say if you want to sleep? I would have gone. Are you unwell, or something? Ogarev wrote that we were to take care of you, not to irritate you and not to cause you agitation. He is really fond of you."

"Yes, I was feeling a little unwell those last few days in Geneva. I am quite well now, just tired. Where is my room? I was told that it would be inadvisable to go to a hotel—too conspicuous."

"Everything is prepared here. You stay in this room—I will go in that one there. When will you be ready tomorrow? What time, approximately?"

"About nine o'clock. Goodnight!"

"Sleep well!"

I locked myself in with the enormous key and lay down to sleep, thinking of Natalya, Sasha and all my family. How surprised they would be if they knew where I really was!

I AWOKE very early. The two small windows looked out on to some gardens, a church, two or three houses and a path which disappeared into the snow, and beyond that endless ranges of snow-covered mountains. Evidently we were deep in the country. At precisely nine o'clock Volkov appeared and first of all persuaded me not only *not* to leave by the first train, but to write to Ogarev that I would be unable to return before the evening of the next day.

"You know yourself that one cannot talk everything over so quickly. And we have a lot to talk over. He explains nothing to me in his letter. And then, you wanted to question me too on various things. Well, write quickly so that he does not become alarmed."

I wrote to Ogarev and Natalie. Then we began once again arguing and debating, and so continued until evening. He informed me that the "Committee" wanted to publish a journal, and to call it *Kolokol* [*The Bell*]. I said that that would be extremely unpleasant, not only for me but for all my family too. I added:

"It must have been your idea and not the Committee's, so you can change it. Your journal will not have anything in common with the old *Bell*, I can see that already—so why take the same title? Only because you hope to attract more readers and have a wider circulation by reminding people of *Papasha's* name and his journal, and I repeat—it is very unpleasant for us. There are many more appropriate titles. Why not call it *The Hammer*, or *The Sword*, or *The Red Cockerel*, anything you like—but not *The Bell*. You know very well that *Papasha* was not at all sympathetic to all these activities, and . . ."[6]

"Allow me," he broke in. "First of all, don't fly off the handle into a passion and get agitated! I have been ordered not to irritate you, and that is why I am afraid of arguing with you. You will be taken ill, and there will be trouble, and what will Ogarev do to me then?"

And he began trying to prove to me that I

[6] Herzen's attitude (as his daughter knew) to the activities of Ogarev, Bakunin, and Nechayev, was that they were a kind of "delirium tremens."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was only speaking from the point of view of a *daughter*, without thinking about "the Cause" or about what was necessary or useful to "the Cause." It was useful to the *cause* for the journal to be circulated as quickly as possible. It was obvious that the name of *The Bell* would facilitate this—so they had to call it by that name. It was from this point of view that *everything* should be decided.

"I will never agree with you on that," I said. "You can see that on this point alone my view as a *daughter* does not coincide with yours. It is clear that we shall meet with cases of this kind at every step, and I know that I shall never be able to cultivate such a one-sided view, or make every judgment or decision from the point of view of its usefulness to your 'Cause.' "

Volkov: "Do not say '*your* Cause,' but '*our* Cause.' "

Myself: "I cannot. I cannot and do not wish to consider myself one of *you*. You can see that we do not agree at all."

Volkov: "It only appears so. Think seriously, break free from your various prejudices and sentimental habits, and you will see that the truth is on my side and that you, as an intelligent woman, cannot think otherwise."

IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE to relate everything, and it would take too long to write it all down. We argued about the despotic rules of their society, about their unbelievable intolerance. Then I remarked that, according to him, everything they did was based on mutual trust, whereas *my* trust in people was formed extremely slowly; I was very suspicious, very cautious....

Volkov: "I have already written to you that we have no need of grudging trust."

Myself: "Yes, that was what I also wanted to ask you about. I did not understand that phrase in your letter—'grudging trust only demoralises and leads to disasters....' How can that be? How can one have complete, boundless trust all at once? It is impossible!"

Volkov: "Of course, half-trust is an immoral thing. One should be either a real friend and comrade, so that one conceals absolutely nothing from the other person, so that everything is transparent, every thought, every stirring of the soul—or else an overt enemy, in which case one tries with all one's might to deceive and destroy him. But these half-and-half relationships, what are they? Sometimes you act sincerely to a person as you would to a friend, and at other times you distrust him and betray him as an enemy. So remember, the first rule is to conceal absolutely nothing. The Committee must without fail know all your thoughts, your tastes, and your desires, so that it will not entrust you with tasks or commissions which you would not be willing to execute."

Myself: "For pity's sake! Do you think I would tell all that to strangers—since I do not really know any one of them! One can only place such a trust in a single person, and even then, only after one has known the person for a long time. I repeat, it would take me, for example, months or years to cultivate in myself such boundless trust, otherwise it would be just blind faith with no foundation. But in fact that is exactly what you want. It is a sort of religion.

(*1*) He showed me a piece of paper, hinting that it was an order from the Committee.... What *The Bell* (or simply their future journal) should extol. (Marat, Babeuf, etc.) He could see by my endless arguing that I had no sympathy for any of it. But he still did not say what my work would consist of. "Helping Ogarev, seeing that the correspondence is sent off promptly, etc."

(*2*) He hid a second paper, saying: "To see the second, you must first of all agree with the first." I replied: "That means you will never show it to me, for I will never agree with the first."

But he did show it to me—several signatures, followed by that of Bakunin. God knows why he showed me the repulsive thing (secret editorial offices, forged money, forged passports, etc.).

(*3*) He charged me with sorting through Ogarev's desk and tidying all his papers.

I ARRIVED BACK in Geneva late in the evening and went directly to see Ogarev to give him the letters and the commissions. There I unexpectedly met Czerniecki; he, thinking that I had come from Berne, began to question me about the Reichels. I felt extremely uncomfortable; it was very unpleasant. I went into another room. Ogarev came in after me and I gave him a few of the commissions. Suddenly he called Czerniecki and gave him, or explained to him the parts which concerned him, and he did this so unsubtly that it was not difficult for Czerniecki to guess that I had not

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been at the Reichels. Sure enough, soon after that he wrote to Sasha that I had become a *Karbonarka*.

I was greatly surprised when, a few days later, I saw Volkov again. I had come to see Ogarev, and there he was. He said that some confusion had arisen and he had had to come there. I declared that I still did not understand what work there could possibly be for me here.

"You will see—we shall discuss it, we'll have a talk." On the pretext that he had no time and that it was awkward for him to talk during the day, he began to spend the evenings with me. Gradually it became clear that I would at first have to deal with the correspondence of booksellers, keep the account-books, send off packets, etc., in short, organise a "Bureau" and keep everything in order.

"But none of that is the real work," he added. "It's all unimportant. It can be done by someone else. The main thing is that you should unite the whole of *émigré* society, rally them all together and steer them in a particular direction."

Myself: "For pity's sake, what could *I* do? I cannot even imagine how to begin such a task."

Volkov: "Well, I will explain to you. When we can no longer influence people by argument and conversation we have to resort to other means. For instance—make all the members of a particular circle quarrel among themselves, all the *émigrés* here, for example, and then work on each one of them separately, talk with them."

Here he launched into details and developed a whole plan of action, "to take care of everything," which so outraged me that I exclaimed:

"But all you are after is a cunning *intrigante* —the whole thing is repulsive to me! If that is the kind of work you are offering me, then no, thank you!"

He smiled ironically and said:

"Please do not be upset, you have been ordered not to get upset—and what a thing to get upset about! What's an *'intrigante'*?—just a meaningless word!"

Myself: "Well, to me it is *not* a meaningless word. And if you call *that* work, you can be sure that I shall not help you—so there!"

GRADUALLY I also came to notice that my laconic replies to all his questions about various persons were not satisfying him. I told him frankly that I certainly did not intend to communicate to him everything I knew and heard.

"What do you mean?" he said with some displeasure. "What kind of trust is that? I told you that we have no need of grudging trust."

Myself: "And I told you that trust is not so easily acquired, and one cannot force oneself all of a sudden and say: have trust in a particular person."

Volkov: "No, you must have complete, boundless trust—without that we can do nothing. You must make everyone have the same trust in you too, make them tell you everything, so that you know all. . . ."

Myself: "So that I can pass it on to you?"

Volkov: "And then you will tell me what you have heard and found out."

Myself: "I understand. In other words, you are proposing that I should be a spy," I said, and the blood rushed to my head.

Again he smiled ironically and said:

"Why use such grand words? You will prove nothing that way."

At the end of every conversation I was more and more convinced that their methods were so repugnant that I could have nothing in common with them. He was continually trying to prove that these methods were essential. Soon Bakunin arrived and assisted him so well in this that they almost succeeded in driving me completely out of my mind.

"What!" he said to me. "Our enemies are ten thousand times stronger than we are, and shrink from no means, and are we to think we can fight them without resorting to the same means? It is madness. Unthinkable! Sending men to their death for nothing! What is our aim? To change the present vile order! Well, the first step towards that is to overthrow the Russian government, and to do that we should use every possible means—or else spit on the whole thing and sit with our arms folded."

A RUMOUR BEGAN to circulate that we were petitioning over our Kostroma estate, and that we wished to return to Russia. All three of them launched into the most violent invective against us. Under their influence Ogarev began inveighing against Sasha and Vogt and saying that they were trying to persuade me to go to Russia and to behave dishonourably. I was, of course, amazed and began defending them, stating that naturally we had ascertained whether we could go back "simply," without behaving dishonourably—that went without saying; we had never even thought of writing or signing a petition.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We know," began Bakunin. "The very fact that one of you is going there is proof that you, that is, the Herzen family, have been reconciled with the Government. You will be welcomed with open arms—and how! You will find yourself moving in aristocratic circles. *Vous verrez comme on vous fêtera!* Your brother will be offered a Chair on the spot—*il se fera une magnifique carrière—mais il souillera par cela le nom de son père!*"

I was on the point of becoming angry, but then I saw how ridiculous it was that a man could be carried away by idle fantasies, or play a part in order to work on my imagination, and finally I said:

"Why are you saying all this? Sasha is not even thinking of going to Russia and looking for a Chair. I repeat, none of us will stoop to anything dishonourable to obtain that estate in Russia. But if Vogt and Scheller are going to put in a claim under Swiss law and are successful, then naturally we shall not say no. But I must admit, I see no reason why we should give away presents to the Russian government. Everything you said is completely irrelevant as far as we are concerned."

Nevertheless, Volkov said to me in a whisper: "We must talk some more about about this without fail this evening. But it's inconvenient here. Let us go to the old man. Do you understand me?"

Myself: "Of course I understand. But why is it awkward here? You have only to go into another room if you do not wish to talk in Ogarev's presence."

Volkov: "I said it was no good, and that means no. Are you afraid or something? It won't be long—only half an hour."

Myself: "Why should I be afraid? I merely think it is unnecessary; all the same, let us go. But mind you do not keep me later than ten o'clock. I do not wish to alarm them all at home every time."

Volkov: "Afraid, are you?" he said ironically. "Will N.A. scold you?"

Myself: "I am not afraid of anyone! I myself do not want to return home late when it is not necessary."

Volkov: "You will always be a pampered little miss! And you will never shake off your prejudices."

WE WERE BY THEN on the way to Bakunin's place, and Volkov, really agitated (or trying to appear indignant), said, apparently mad with rage:

"Do you not see what they are doing to you? Are you a child who does not understand, or are you made of wood, that you can look on so calmly, so indifferently, while dishonourable deeds are committed all around you?"

Myself: "I do not understand you! Why are you angry, why are you abusing me? Who is committing dishonourable deeds?"

Volkov: "Will you not understand that they are selling you," he said in a furious whisper. "Those people who call themselves your close friends. Selling you to the Russian Government."

For a whole minute I thought he had gone mad and I did not reply, particularly since we were now at Bakunin's door.

WE ENTERED the diminutive room of the mighty agitator. Volkov sat down a little apart with a ferocious expression. His Tyrolean hat tipped to one side and an enormous scarf carelessly flung around his neck, his whole figure had the air of a bandit, and his expression was striking in its energy, malice, and cruelty. Bakunin began explaining to me that I must not be surprised that one could not say everything in Ogarev's presence. Surely I could see for myself that it was simply dangerous, that he might give something away when he was in a state of intoxication.

Then he began repeating what he had already said to me in the morning, wishing to prove to me that Natalya, Sasha and company were bourgeois parasites who thought only of money and dreamed only of increasing their fortune, and that Natalya was staying by me only because it was to her advantage, and that was why she pretended to be attached to me. At this I protested violently, remarking that he had no right to speak of her in that way. And then I listened in amazement to a tirade from him. Some of the remarks he made I found so insulting that I did not even take the trouble to reply to them. He repeated that if we returned to Russia and the Kostroma estate was given back to us it would be a disgrace to our generation, so humiliating, so shameful, etc.

(At this point Volkov joined in, looking at me almost savagely: "It goes without saying that if you *do* go to Russia our people will be obliged to get rid of you somehow!" I looked

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

curiously at this strange being without showing the slightest fear or agitation, and waited to see how it would end. Bakunin glanced at him reproachfully and said: "Now, what's all this? Threatening, are you? What kind of an idea is that? Well, he really is in a rage—just look at him.")

Then he began telling me that I simply must make up my mind which side I wished to be on, because I ought not to be on both sides at once, it was not a good thing.

"I understand what is stopping you. You are thinking: 'They are fooling me, I know they are Jesuits, so why should I believe them? They are saying one thing to me now but in reality they are thinking and wanting another. Perhaps all they are really after is my money, and they want to exploit me?' Well, confess, did that thought not cross your mind just now?"

Myself: "It has crossed my mind more than once. But the main thing which makes me hesitate is not that, but the fact that I can see no work for myself, and also that I still have doubts about whether you are following the right course at all. *Chi va piano va sano....*"

Bakunin launched into a lengthy dissertation which ended thus:

"Will you not understand that all around you, in your private life, nothing is done 'simply,' nothing said 'simply.' There you have your real Jesuits, not here among us. You ask what you can do. That will become apparent with time. And meanwhile... but it's impossible to talk openly and simply with you, or I would say in words of one syllable—leave yourself the *'stricte nécessaire'* to live on and give the rest to the common cause. But one cannot say that to you now," he continued after a pause, seeing that I was not replying.

("Although there will be nothing you can do. Struggle as much as you like, but sooner or later we'll have your money.... The social revolution is inevitable... and very near...." "You may be sure," I said, "that when that day comes I shall not weep—and I will not wait for them to take everything away from me, I will give it away myself." He gave an ironic smile, glanced at Volkov and said: "Well, we shall soon see whether you are sincere or not.")

"Unfortunately you grew up among people who respected gold and money above all. Your father had this weakness and he left it to you, his children, as a legacy. You poor children of Herzen, I pity you. What a life yours is, colourless, passionless. Nothing has ever aroused your enthusiasm. You have always been sensible, afraid of doing something silly, and so you have never done *anything*. He who does nothing never makes a mistake, but he never does anything worthwhile either. Do you really want to be governess to N.A.'s daughter, or nanny to your brother's children? That is beneath you. You need wider horizons. Here is some work ready and waiting for you. Do you seriously think that we want to rob you? Judge for yourself! Did you know that we have a huge capital over there in Russia—millions! As if we wanted your kopeks! They are just a drop in the ocean!" (Contradictions at every point.)

"No, you can be useful to us through your influence on Ogarev, who really is becoming a physical wreck. If you are with him he will almost certainly drink less. Do not leave him, at least. I say this out of a feeling of, well, reverence for the poor old man—I feel terribly sorry for him." (But as he said this I could not help thinking that he was in reality trying to find a way of preventing me from going too far away, because as long as I was with Ogarev they would certainly manage to squeeze as much as they liked out of me.)

As he was taking his leave, he said:

"Remember, Tata, that we do not want to interfere in your dealings with Ogarev. Do as you see fit with him, help him as much as you wish. We do not wish to know anything about it, and will never accept anything from you."

I made no reply, but inwardly I was greatly amused at hearing these generous words, since I was perfectly well aware that if I was helping Ogarev it was because they were putting him to expense—the money was coming from the same source, so why this comedy? And I recalled the crude hint he had addressed to me a few days earlier. He had said to me in Ogarev's presence and simply *de but en blanc*: "I hope that the children of Herzen will be ashamed to leave Ogarev without means." I felt the blood rush to my head. What an unimaginable indelicacy!

I STILL COULD NOT make the decision, and I did not clearly understand what exactly they wanted of me.

"You simply must take a decisive step," Volkov kept saying to me, "to prove that you are not lacking in character."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When I asked him what he meant by a decisive step, he replied:

"Well, you must know that yourself by now. Prove that you really are dissatisfied with the existing order, if everything you have said is not empty words. Shake off all your prejudices, protest against the present order, otherwise you will be merely criticising and continuing to live the same life. We have no need of your criticisms, but if you want some serious work, liberate yourself from all the people around you, all those N.A.s, those Pan Tchorzewskis, and so on."

Myself: "So what you mean by a decisive step is just that I should live alone, or at least, not with N.A?"

Volkov: "No, not just that, although that, of course, would be a start. It would prove that you are independent."

I tried to show him that it would be all very well if Natalya oppressed me, but since she allowed me complete freedom, and did not pry into their affairs, it was decidedly unnecessary.

"You will see," he went on, "that very soon there will be nothing you have in common with her, so why live together then? It would be much better, and you would be much freer, living separately."

Myself: "We shall see. I am fond of them and I want to live with them. If it turns out that we no longer have anything in common, then let *them* leave; I do not want to desert them. In any case, where I live is none of your concern, and I know that at the moment I am perfectly free."

BAKUNIN supported me here and said that I should not listen to Volkov, that he did not recognise any kind of affection; he did not believe that people who lived together became so accustomed to each other that it was hard for them to part; everything that was not "the Cause," was in his opinion triviality, sentimentalism, etc.... There were certain things on which they did not agree. For example, Volkov said to me that in order to help them and really become a "strong woman," I would have to abandon absolutely everything else and work exclusively for *their cause*. "And then you will learn what real life is," he said with pride, "real friendship and complete trust. We each live to the full, and I have the same trust in my comrades as I have in myself," etc.

They began having arguments about the purpose of the journal and what its "colour" should be. Ogarev and Bakunin tried unsuccessfully to convince Volkov that it was essential that *The Bell* should be *"red."* Volkov insisted that we take to his fancy: he tried to prove, for his part, that we should publish a "multi-coloured" or a "colourless" paper so that everyone would be intrigued and people of all shades of political opinion could be equally represented in it—of course, for the purpose of expressing their discontent with or their hatred for the Russian Government.

I did not like the sound of all this in the least, and I had a feeling that the result would be utter nonsense and trash—and all under the name of *The Bell*!

THE OLD MEN, as he called Ogarev and Bakunin, argued and argued, and once Ogarev almost came to blows with Volkov over the "colour" of *The Bell*. Volkov insisted that there should not be a word about socialism in the journal, nor any sharply expressed opinions. Ogarev did not like this, he wanted to write freely, and began speaking very rudely and curtly to Volkov. Bakunin cursed them both, until they were ashamed of themselves, and then himself began attempting to persuade Ogarev to try out Volkov's fancy and see what came of it. The old men yielded before the young tyrant.

When the time came to decide details of printing and format, Volkov suddenly declared to me that "the Committee" considered it unseemly and entirely inappropriate to display the names of Bakunin and Ogarev.

"What shall we do, then, whom shall we choose for editor?"

"Take one of the *émigrés*," I said, guessing that he already had a plan prepared in his mind. "There are plenty of them, Zhukovsky, for example, Mechnikov, etc., or Kasatkina, if you prefer a woman."

"No, none of them are any good. I say, why don't *you* be editor?" he exclaimed all of a sudden, as though struck by a brilliant new idea, whereas it was perfectly apparent to me that he had thought up this cunning remark earlier, but did not know how to make it in such a way that I could not possibly reject the proposition. That is why he was not very pleased when I replied: "Not for anything in the world!"

A stream of questions followed: "What? Why? That means that you do not wish to do

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

anything for 'the Cause,' you want to be a parasite forever, a pampered little miss." Seeing that insolence and taunts had no effect, he began begging and persuading me in honeyed tones that I, "as an intelligent woman," *could not* refuse, that I must be only too well aware of the desperate situation I would be putting him in, and that the whole Cause would grind to a halt on account of it. It was all in vain. This time I did not give way. I repeated that I really could not be the Editor; I was inexperienced and had little knowledge, and did not want to play the part of a puppet. They only wanted my name, and I would not give them my name, especially for God knows what "multi-coloured" journal, in which *Papasha* was very likely even going to be attacked.

For a few days we had the most terrible arguments about it, which at times drove me to despair. He would not leave me alone, and when I walked away he would say: "So, the matter is settled. We shall not speak of it any more. You are the Editor."

And I would repeat: "Yes, we ought to have finished speaking about it a long time ago. You can see I am unshakeable and I will not be the Editor of your journal. I will not even give you my address to send letters."

He raged and raged and was finally compelled to give up. Then he had the idea of saying that *The Bell* was published by certain representatives of the Russian Cause.

On Sunday 3 April the first issue of *The Bell* was due to appear. Ogarev wrote a note asking me to come and assist him for the first time—the Committee had not yet sent anyone—by writing out addresses, sticking labels, etc. I went there in the morning. Mary [Sutherland] told me that on the previous day, late in the evening, another "boy" had suddenly appeared and spent the night there. A fine specimen of contemporary Russian youth! Small, thin and slightly stooped despite his young face; judging by the total absence of moustache and beard, he was about twenty. His hair—thin, dry, and dark—had not seen a comb for so long that it stuck out in all directions in separate wisps and knots.

By the strange, hesitant gaze of his small dark eyes it was easy to see that he was very short-sighted. Under his long, black, tattered frock-coat he wore a red cotton shirt; his neck was adorned with a narrow black tie, knotted crookedly; there was no sign of any linen. As I opened the door he was pacing up and down the room with long strides, and evidently giving a report to Volkov. Seeing that they were discussing very serious matters, I withdrew immediately. He soon left, but returned two or three hours later when I was sitting in Henry Sutherland's room wrapping up the journal. Volkov showed him in in silence; he began helping me, also in silence. To my question "Who is this boy?" Volkov gave the laconic reply, "One of ours, a very good man, and he's not a boy either—he's older than me." I concluded that he did not wish to explain to me who his comrade was, and asked no more questions, nor did I speak to the boy. After a long silence Volkov turned to him and addressed him as Serebrennikov. There began a conversation from which I understood that this [Vladimir] Serebrennikov had been living in the house of someone from *Narodnoye Delo* [*People's Cause*] for several months past, enjoying their complete trust, and feigning absolute solidarity with them, while at the same time, here, he mocked them and called them scum who did not want to do anything. He told us he had made one of them drink so that he would blab and show him various files, cupboards, etc.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I recalled Volkov once boasting that "one of *ours*," as he expressed it, had been living in the *Narodnoye Delo* circle for several months, and that they believed he was one of their own men. At that time I had said to him that in my opinion it was a most repulsive game. Now I had discovered, or guessed, that it was this young Serebrennikov he had been talking about, and consequently the boy made an extremely disagreeable impression on me. At the time I saw him, *i.e.*, in early April, the *Narodnoye Delo* organisation thought he had gone away long ago; and so he was hiding from them. Volkov told me that he had only just arrived, that he had been travelling for three or four days without resting or taking time to wash himself or comb his hair, and that he would be continuing on his way somewhere else the same evening. Serebrennikov himself told me that he had made a speech in French at the grave of Serno-Solovevich.

ONCE, AT THE END OF MARCH, Volkov sprang a surprise on me, and it was indeed an unexpected one. It occurred to him to announce to me, or at least to suggest, that he found me attractive. He discoursed at length and so obscurely on the subject of trust and friendly relations in general that I understood absolutely nothing, but towards the end it was impossible not to understand, and his question was so unexpected that I was quite confused and even frightened—of what, I did not know myself. Suddenly I remembered the whole business with Penisi [a friend in Italy]. For a long time I made no reply, hoping that I had misunderstood him or that he had not expressed his meaning properly. Yes, I really wished that it were so, because I foresaw that all this would lead to the most tiresome, disagreeable, embarrassing and stupid relations.

However, after a long silence, he repeated his question, and added:

"I understand, it is probably the ring that is preventing you from replying."

There was no reason to doubt or hesitate any longer, and I answered him:

"You are putting me in an extremely embarrassing and disagreeable position. You yourself must have noticed that there is absolutely nothing, as far as I am concerned."

"It is my fault, I was mistaken, let us speak no more of it."

"Naturally, that would be best."

I would never have thought that this crude, half-savage ruffian could have written or offered a single word about love. And because of my scepticism I did not believe him, but instead began searching to discover what he hoped to gain from such an attempt, and what he could possibly expect if he were successful. It was only long afterwards that I began to experience some doubt, that is, to suspect the possibility of there being perhaps a small grain of sincerity in his words, after he had repeated the same thing several times, even in writing, and complained that all his words were having no effect on me and he was literally burning with shame....

Why it was that I did not have the wit to abandon everything and go away, in spite of his pleading, and his reproaching me for not wanting to do anything, I cannot understand now. But at that time, when I still believed that they really did have a "Cause," and that I really could be of some help to Aga, and to others too, who were—as they put it—in danger, all Volkov's sallies, however repugnant to me, could not destroy my desire to prove that I was ready and willing to work to the best of my abilities. Moreover, in my mind I was unbearably confused about everything, and this tormented me terribly. I wanted at all costs to reach the truth, to achieve a clear understanding. On all sides I heard conflicting rumours, and to examine and make sense of them in that atmosphere of mystery was impossible. There was only one thing to do: decide to ignore Volkov's uncivilised, crude and insolent behaviour, continue my observations, and hope that time would make everything clearer. And so it did....

THERE WERE TIMES when I was in despair, when I even wrote to him that I did not believe in anything, and that their theories, systems, and methods were repugnant to me.[7] Neverthe-

[7] In a letter to Masha Reichel (1872), Natalie Herzen wrote: "Be very cautious with all these Russians who have recently arrived.... A new type of man *à la* Nechayev is forming among them, a kind of revolutionary Jesuit, who is ready for every vileness in order to achieve his goal, *i.e.*, the revolution in Russia. To this end, and in the most shameless fashion, he feels free to lie, to read other people's letters, to steal documents, keys, etc. In Russia they force people to make contributions of enormous sums or else be denounced to the police. Those are the facts, Masha. It is really sickening."

The character of Nechayev in the eyes of Bakunin —for whom he was "the young savage" and "the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

less, he sometimes succeeded in awakening—for a moment or two—my trust in what he called "the Cause." Once again I would be caught up in it, and in that nebulous state I could not summon up the strength to refuse to render him and Ogarev small services when I received notes of this kind: "We are swamped with work. Help us just for these few days. You know I am completely alone and that bad news is coming in from all sides—and you leave us at such a time." Ogarev wrote and spoke in similar tones; he refused to accept my pleading and my explanations, but repeated: "Yes, we.... Have patience just a little longer, Tata, you know that in a few days one of 'theirs' will be arriving. It's not nice of you to abandon us like this."

At last I realised that I was being tricked: as long as I gave in to them, they would never let me go. It was essential that Volkov should move.

3 July 1870

TODAY I had my first meeting with Bakunin after all these annoyances and letters. He was very eager to see me. What interests and worries them most of all is that I know young Vladimir Serebrennikov. In effect, that was all Bakunin wished to know from me —*what* had I said to the *Narodnoye Delo* people? I repeated that to Utin I had said nothing, and Olga Stepanovna I had warned to be very careful. I was afraid for her, knowing that she was about to go to Russia; I imagined that this Vladimir Serebrennikov, since he enjoyed her complete trust, might keep in his possession, or hand over to *Narodnaya Rasprava*, some of her papers or secrets and make use of them while she was in Russia. They stop at nothing and are ready to have her imprisoned, or otherwise torture her to squeeze all her money out of her. From Bakunin I learned that Nechayev ["Volkov"] told him that they would not let go of me for anything, adding: "Only think of it, three hundred thousand francs!" And also, that I was very difficult to *please*, but someone could possibly be sent especially, to make me fall in love with one of *"theirs."*

I finally said that in the meantime I would say nothing and I did not want to get mixed up in anything, but that I did not consider myself in any way bound to keep any promises whatsoever, since I had right from the beginning been most shamefully deceived. They had shown me a marvellously constructed machine, given me the handle, and asked me to help them turn it, saying that it would produce cheap bread or flour for the People, but after some time I found that they had tricked me, and that I was helping to manufacture a kind of poisonous paste which caused suffering to the friendly, the indifferent, and the hostile alike. Was I bound to continue the work I had begun, to help them and keep all this a secret? Not in the least! I had been tricked, and there was nothing binding me....

Bakunin agreed, merely remarking that I "had perhaps spoken prematurely to Olga Stepanovna," and asking me to say nothing more about Vladimir Serebrennikov for the moment. He said that I was perfectly free to tell Natalya of the circumstances surrounding my journey to Locle, and to say that Nechayev had played a much greater part in all this than he, Bakunin. Also, that the letters I had been receiving in Paris were from Nechayev and not Bakunin. I should tell Natalya all this now so that she should know the facts before receiving her explanation from Bakunin.

7 July 1870

IT APPEARS THAT all is indeed over between Bakunin, Ogarev, and Nechayev. The latter, too, is here in Geneva once again. Apparently they have had terrible arguments in recent days. On the morning of Tuesday 5th, Semen Serebrennikov brought me a note from Ogarev asking me to come at once to see him. Fortunately I had a headache and refused; besides, I somehow guessed that Nechayev was there. After lunch Bystrov arrived with a warning that Nechayev intended to come and see me; upon learning that I would not be there, he apparently became angry and demanded

young tiger," and "one of those fanatics who doubt nothing and fear nothing"—remained unblemished; and to the end he had faith in his revolutionary role as "a hero." Other contemporaries shared Natalie Herzen's less romantic view: Karl Marx, for example. Marx referred to the document by which Nechayev stopped Bakunin's work on the translation of *Das Kapital* as "the letter of a swine." In the 1871 resolution which he prepared for the First International exposing Nechayev's activities, Marx accused him of "false [and] fraudulent use of the name of the International... in order to make dupes and victims in Russia." See: Franz Mehring, *Marx* (1935), pp. 487–90; *Documents of the First International* (1964), vol. IV, pp. 298, 434.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that they all accompany him to my house immediately. The others refused. They argued without a break until evening. At about seven o'clock that evening Vladimir Serebrennikov appeared with a note from Nechayev himself saying that *"an explanation was imperative."* Vladimir Serebrennikov refused to believe that I was not at home; but I had just gone out with Sasha Reichel. At ten o'clock in the evening Bystrov came in haste with a message from Bakunin, who feared for me, and advised me to go away for a few days, leaving the remaining funds with Ogarev. Bystrov stayed for a little while, intending to help if the need arose, that is, if Nechayev, Vladimir Serebrennikov, and Charles tried to enter by force. But no one came. However, Vladimir Serebrennikov turned up again yesterday and demanded to see me without fail. Erminiya told him that I had gone away for a few days. Very likely he did not believe her, for he left a note asking me—or ordering me—to be in between six o'clock and half-past-six. I did not intend to receive him. I stayed at home the whole day, but none of them arrived. Instead, Ogarev came. He arrived at one o'clock despite the terrible heat—*33 degrees* Centigrade. The poor old man was afraid for me. He feared that Nechayev might treat me roughly. Poor Aga! How many times must he be disappointed in his "children"? He took the funds from me—that is, the 470 francs 50, which remained—and gave me a receipt in case Nechayev or Vladimir Serebrennikov should demand the money. Then he went off with Semen Serebrennikov to give it to the banker Reverdin.

WHY SHOULD I see Nechayev again? What does he want of me? God knows. Very likely he will start assuring me again that he has always been sincere and frank with me! Or perhaps he will simply demand the rest of the money from me, or else some of Bakunin's letters, or his own, or possibly try to frighten me from speaking about Vladimir Serebrennikov to Olga Stepanovna or to anyone of the *Narodnoye Delo*!

But even so, after all this, there is still one question I have not settled in my mind: Is he a fanatic or an unscrupulous crook? Was he sincere when he tried to convince people of the necessity for his Polish-Jesuitic system of deceit and mystification, or are they all of them the ignoble instruments of the Russian Government?

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Henry Miller

The Abuse of Psychiatry

I MUST BEGIN with a qualification introduced by any writer about to discuss a persecuted minority. Many of my best friends are psychiatrists. This statement is more than a formality in the present context, because as a clinical neurologist I have had the good fortune over the years to work with and learn from a team of eclectic psychiatrists of outstanding calibre. They are the sort of hard-headed psychiatrists who would send the patient back to me with the polite suggestion that I have another look for the cerebral tumour—and they had an infuriating habit of being right. This is certainly one of his important functions, and the psychiatrist whose knowledge and experience of the many disguises of serious organic disease are too insecurely based for its exercise is a danger to his patient.

A few years ago a senior psychiatric colleague and I founded the "Society for the Abolition of Psychiatrists." Before I am overwhelmed with applications to join—and they have already come from some of Britain's most eminent psychiatrists—as well as, predictably, from a number of patients—I must point out that the society has not yet received its charter, and does no more than epitomise our conviction that the psychiatrist must be first and foremost and all the time a physician, expert certainly in unravelling the complexities of mental symptomatology, but also at least as adept in general medicine as his cardiological or neurological colleagues. In fact psychiatry is neurology without physical signs, a difficult branch of medicine that calls for diagnostic virtuosity of the highest order. Indeed, since the psychiatrist is concerned with disorders that carry a considerable mortality and a serious morbidity it is truly alarming that his is the only one of its branches that can be practised at a responsible level without a thorough training in internal medicine—without such a background of general clinical experience as is demanded, for example, of the skin specialist.

THE PATTERN OF BRITISH PSYCHIATRY has its roots in history, and especially in the traditional isolation of psychiatrists in mental asylums, physically removed from the stimulating environment of the great general hospitals where the most advanced clinical medicine was developed and practised. On the continent of Europe this situation was tempered by the close association between psychiatry and neurology. Most universities had combined departments, and indeed many of the great figures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were equally expert in both disciplines. The same applied initially in the United States, and the separation of the two disciplines is fairly recent. The association with neurology gave psychiatry an academic foothold, and ensured that the best of continental and American psychiatry retained a firm basis in medicine and neurology. The isolation of the British psychiatrist was partly due to the historical accident that clinical neurology developed in Britain as a branch of internal medicine rather than as a close associate of psychiatry.

In 1939 Britain could boast no more than a handful of physicians fully trained in psychiatry as well as in medicine, and they were mostly either in London or in Scotland. The war-time realisation of the magnitude of psychiatric illness and disability, and the coincidental therapeutic revolution in psychiatry, effected a radical change in this situation. The mental hospital psychiatrist was translated to wider

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fields of activity especially in the Armed Forces, improving his old skills and developing new ones, while the years immediately following the War saw the invasion of psychiatry by a regiment of well-trained young men. But the supply of high-grade recruits to the subject remained far short of meeting requirements, and the need to employ a large body of mental hospital medical officers for routine clinical duties has sustained a double standard of psychiatric practice. At one end of the scale is the consultant who has had a basic training in scientific medicine and probably several years of work in a general medical clinic before taking up psychiatry, already a Member of the Royal College of Physicians. At the other end is the mental hospital psychiatrist who has acquired a specialist diploma in psychiatry, but who has often had little training or practical experience in internal medicine, and whose professional life has been spent almost entirely in mental hospital practice. Doctors of the latter group are often highly skilled in the institutional management of severe mental illness; but they are less equipped for the extra-mural functions of the psychiatrist, whose consultative and outpatient practice comprises an enormous range of clinical problems, poses extremely difficult diagnostic issues, and demands immediate clinical decisions of great urgency and importance.

THE PROBLEMS RAISED by this double standard are very much in the minds of all psychiatrists. The higher examinations in internal medicine are searching. They require considerable and extended practical experience of clinical work in a variety of fields, as well as a grasp of basic medical science and fairly high intellectual capacity. They are often beyond the reach of the less outstanding recruits to psychiatry, and the Royal Colleges have been reluctant to make the minor concessions in the examination for psychiatrists that could have ensured at least a general improvement in the specialty's standards. The characteristic inertia of the established bodies has led to the impending establishment of a separate college. Although this has been delayed by internecine strife, it now seems virtually certain. Such a development will consolidate and perpetuate the double standard. The best psychiatrists will continue to seek the status of physicians, and will undertake the arduous clinical apprenticeship that leads first to a higher qualification in medicine. The remainder will acquire a qualification orientated towards psychiatry as an autonomous discipline, superior certainly to the present Diploma in Psychological Medicine, but short of furnishing any kind of guarantee that the psychiatrist will also really be a physician. It is hard today to evoke great enthusiasm for either Royal Colleges or examinations, but when one considers the psychiatric disguises in which liver failure, brain tumour or inflammation, and lung cancer may present themselves to the psychiatrist, he is perhaps the best of all possible excuses for the continued existence of the searching higher examination in internal medicine.

I HOPE I HAVE already made it clear that I have a high respect for psychiatry and that I regard it beyond doubt as the most important as well as the most fascinating branch of medicine. Unfortunately it is also the most abused, and there is little consolation in the reflection that much of the abuse of psychiatry is self-abuse: many psychiatrists lend it their wholehearted collaboration.

In a nutshell, most of the abuses of the psychiatrist arise from his reluctance to restrict his activities to the field in which he is genuinely qualified to operate. The Oxford Dictionary definition of a psychiatrist is "one who treats mental disease." Not, you will observe, one who prevents wars, cures anti-Semitism, offers to transform the normally abrasive relations between men into a tedium of stultifying harmony, is the ultimate authority on bringing up children or selecting managing directors—or misuses his jargon to pronounce on every issue of the day in an incessant series of television appearances.

If we look again at the dictionary definition we must consider the term "mental disease." What does it mean? It means *disease with mental symptoms*. Mental disease is no more exclusively a disease of the mind than rheumatoid disease is exclusively a disease of the joints. In both there may be widespread disturbances of other body systems—and both are conveniently categorised on the basis of their most conspicuous symptoms. To the lay public, mental illness used to mean (and perhaps to some extent still means) *insanity*, a social rather than a medical term, suspect because of its spurious definitiveness, but on reflection perhaps still better defined than its successor "mental illness"—which is used to cover everything from

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shop-lifting to the psychological signs of a brain tumour. What mental illness means to the physician, of course, is illness with mental symptoms, illness that presents as a psychological disturbance. To practically all novelists and playwrights, to many laymen, and to a mercifully shrinking band of metaphysical psychiatrists, this means illness due to "emotional causes." But the experienced physician knows that illness with mental symptoms often results from physical causes, and indeed that nearly everything we know *with certainty* about the causes of mental disease has been gleaned from information at this level.

1. WHEN, FOR EXAMPLE, the spirochaete of syphilis invades the brain tissues it evokes an indolent inflammatory and degenerative response, with gradual loss of function and ultimate disappearance of thousands of brain cells. The clinical picture is fairly characteristic, though it begins mildly and innocently enough and more often than not is at first misinterpreted and treated as "neurotic." In the fully developed case this progresses through insidious decline in intellect and behaviour to a deteriorated, often expansive and over-cheerful mental state in which the patient endows himself with the physical prowess of Cassius Clay, the intellect of Einstein, and the amorous virtuosity of Casanova.

FOLLOWING a minor surgical operation in hospital a middle-aged commercial traveller became wildly confused and held prolonged conversations with non-existent visitors. Enquiry revealed a history of personality change and a deterioration in occupational efficiency during the preceding six months.

Before this time he had been highly successful in his business activities and he had in fact won several annual national awards in his line of business. About nine months before this unimportant operation he began to complain of easy fatigue and three months later consulted his doctor with a vaguely neurasthenic syndrome. He was given simple medical treatment and some psychotherapy by his practitioner, without improvement. Neither the patient's family nor his medical practitioner appreciated the serious significance of an insidious decline in his personality and habits. Previously a highly respected figure, grave and dignified, he outraged his wife and neighbours by telling dubious stories in mixed company. He appeared late for work, and on more than one occasion exploited his complaint of fatigue to spend the day in bed. His business efficiency had declined so seriously that his employers were considering his dismissal.

All this was attributed to psychological causes, but routine tests in hospital confirmed the presence of active cerebral syphilis. He showed a rapid response to penicillin and made an excellent recovery. Had the correct diagnosis not been reached accidentally because of his hospital admission in another connection, his mental deterioration would soon have become irreversible.

2. PORPHYRIA, on the other hand, is an inborn error of metabolism in which the periodic overproduction of a pigment in the blood-stream causes acute episodic mental illness of alarming degree, possibly by provoking intermittent spasm of blood vessels in various parts of the nervous system, and often in association with very severe abdominal pain. This was almost certainly the disease that caused George III's intermittent madness. At that time the condition was unrecognised, and the sometimes brutal mismanagement of the royal illness makes gloomy and pathetic reading.

AN INTELLIGENT YOUNG professional woman went on a summer cruise. She had a rough crossing and was given some tablets by a fellow passenger to settle her vomiting and dizziness. The next morning she suffered severe abdominal pain and became very emotional and mentally confused. The ship's doctor gave her further sedatives which made matters worse rather than better. She saw a doctor at each of several ports of call. Each administered a sedative, and after each such treatment her condition became worse again.

Arriving back in England the history was repeated. Intermittent abdominal pain continued, while she was still very agitated and occasionally seemed to be hearing voices. She was intermittently and violently emotional, which was quite out of keeping with her normal personality. This was the story, and apart from her abnormal emotional condition there was nothing to find on examination. Like most of those who had previously seen her, her own doctor considered the whole situation "hysterical." This diagnosis seemed quite incompatible with her previously resilient and effective personality, but I could think of no convincing alternative.

Halfway home the penny dropped: I turned my car round and returned to the house, where examination of her urine clinched the presence of porphyria. She was a mild case, though careful enquiry disclosed previous episodes of pain and mental disorder, sometimes one and sometimes the other predominating. As in many such cases her condition was activated by a number of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drugs, amongst which barbiturates are conspicuous. The amytal and phenobarbitone administered for sedation during her sea trip intensified the biochemical abnormality and provoked symptoms of the latent disorder.

The diagnosis of an inborn anomaly was clinched when examination revealed a similar condition in her mother, who had several times been briefly admitted to a mental hospital. With careful avoidance of drugs known to exacerbate the biochemical fault the patient has subsequently avoided serious trouble.

3. The presence of a tumour in the pancreas intermittently secreting large amounts of insulin not only causes occasional fits quite indistinguishable from those due to epilepsy, but also leads to bizarre psychiatric illness, initially intermittent but ultimately persistent and irreversible. Confusion and excitement often alternate with periods of stupor or coma, and this is ultimately followed by intellectual deterioration of severe degree in untreated cases.

A MIDDLE-AGED WORKMAN watched a popular medical television programme based on the history of a case of this kind. His wife had been in a neighbouring mental hospital for nearly a year. As the programme unfolded he was dumbfounded by the similarity of the television dramatisation to the course of his wife's illness.

The next morning he presented himself at the gates of the mental hospital, asked to see the medical superintendent, and told him the story. The superintendent was a shrewd and percipient man. Within a week the husband's diagnosis was confirmed, the pancreatic tumour was successfully removed at operation, and the woman made a perfect recovery.

To quote such cases is not to maintain the untenable claim that gross structural disease will be found in *every* patient with serious mental illness, though a scrupulous search will reveal significant physical abnormalities much more often than might be suspected. What these cases demonstrate is the order of the main causal factor in these psychoses, which are clearly accessible to physical rather than to psychological investigation and manipulation.

EVERYTHING WE HAVE LEARNED from the last three decades of rigorous psychiatric research favours the view that the important mental illnesses—*e.g.*, depression and schizophrenia—originate in disturbances of biochemistry and metabolism. The illness is coloured and its symptomatology to some extent determined by the patient's personality and previous experiences, but the patient has become ill for physical reasons and his symptoms can be controlled only by manipulation of the physical component of his illness. The layman often objects that to treat the psychiatric patient with drugs is merely to treat symptoms and not to deal with "the root cause" of the illness. Such fundamentalism is foreign to medicine. It is the symptoms that are troubling the patient, not the latent vulnerability—which he bore with cheerful insouciance until it impinged on his consciousness—and, in any case, treatment in *every* field of medicine is more often directed to relief of symptoms than to the unrealistic aim of rebuilding the organism.

Even our prevailing mood depends on the level of certain identifiable chemical substances deep in the brain. A drug such as amphetamine (Benzedrine), which increases the concentration of cerebral catecholamines, excites an all-too-transient elation; one that destroys or blocks these chemical compounds may evoke gloom to the point of suicidal rumination. Indeed, models of some types of mental disease can be induced with reasonable predictability by the use of certain drugs. Especially in patients with a strong family history of depression, the drug reserpine, occasionally used for the control of high blood pressure, quite often produces a classical depressive illness. Prolonged and excessive dosage with amphetamine on the other hand evokes an illness that approximates to an experimental and reversible schizophrenia. The patient may well believe himself "spied on" and "persecuted." Although clearly conscious he may suffer fluctuating and variable delusions and be tortured by auditory hallucinations which terrify or threaten him. Furthermore, although the amphetamine addicts susceptible to such illnesses are often emotionally unstable, there is no evidence that this rapidly reversible schizophrenic-type illness itself has any constitutional component. It appears to be entirely due to the drug, and fades when it is withdrawn.

We know that both general diseases (such as lung cancer) and neurological illnesses (such as multiple sclerosis) may evoke serious psychiatric disturbances even before they have become evident in physical disability.

We know that certain drugs like sodium amytal, Librium, and Tofranil have specific and predictable effects on certain psychiatric symptoms such as insomnia, tension, and depression, respectively.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As a matter of fact this is really about all we know. Since the flight into so-called "dynamic psychiatry," with its speculative and entirely affirmative basis in psychological determinism, psychiatry has suffered from a surfeit of complex and unprovable theory and a dearth of simple testable hypotheses. Not unnaturally, the psychiatrist who believes that the phenomena of mental illness can be explained on the basis of *a universal prefabricated theory*, rather than by building a growing structure of certain knowledge on the basis of controlled observation and experiment, finds little difficulty in blowing up his theory to explain not only mental disease but also normal human behaviour, interpersonal relations, and ultimately world affairs. The results of such exercises are not impressive.

THE PSYCHIATRIST is, of course, encouraged in his universal pontification by the inexplicable veneration with which his views are regarded by many who ought to know better. Socially, this surely springs in part from the priest's loss of prestige and from the collapse of religious values. Certainly the highly wrought and arcane structure of psycho-analysis betrays its man-made origin as transparently as does that of any religion. Nor is it fanciful to note the similarity that obtains in the wordy battles so full-bloodedly enjoyed by adherents of competing faiths whether religious or psychiatric.

But at a simpler level the popular endowment of the psychiatrist with universal omniscience also arises from a basic lay fallacy that few psychiatrists make any attempt to dispel. There are many quite well-educated people who really believe that psychiatrists have special and mysterious methods of finding out what is going on in their patients' minds that are denied to the rest of the profession and indeed to the rest of humanity. Such people do not appreciate—because they have never been told—the simple fact that a psychiatrist is *a physician who takes a longer history*, partly because he sees fewer patients. Does the psychiatrist know more about the roots of normal human behaviour than anyone else? His claim to do so arises from the fact that he studies the caricatures of normal human behaviour that present as psychoses or neuroses. He can certainly theorise about normal behaviour, but when he moves outside his strictly professional field there is little evidence that his views are any more interesting or his conclusions any more reliable than those of the rest of us. They are certainly less illuminating and less convincing than those of the novelist.

One curious phenomenon concerns "insight." This is the subject of so much discussion in psychiatric circles, in clinical formulations, and especially amongst those psychiatrists who lay great store on introspective data, that one might imagine it would be a quality carefully cultivated as well as highly valued by psychiatrists themselves. I have no hesitation in saying quite categorically that this is not so. Personal experience confirms the rather unexpected finding that the practice of psychiatry in any of its forms does not necessarily confer any insight whatever. Whether mechanist or psycho-analyst, there are many psychiatrists who manifest that insightless insensitivity to audience reaction that is the hallmark of the bore.

I HAVE EMPHASISED the psychiatrist's eagerness to account for psychological phenomena on the basis of some universal theory as evidence of his rejection of the methods of science; and indeed lack of objectivity is probably the main reason for the reluctance with which the typical psychiatrist is accepted into the scientific community. An eminent British professor of psychiatry recently went so far as to explain to an audience of lawyers, judges, and doctors that since the taking of a psychiatric history and the making of a psychiatric formulation involve the psychiatrist so intimately with the patient at an emotional level it was quite impossible for him ever to act as an objective expert witness in a court of law. He must always, according to this authority, be "on the side of" the person examined—a sort of perpetual prisoner's friend. Needless to say, this remark was greeted with alarm by one group of lawyers and with hilarious relief by others (who felt it fully confirmed everything they had long felt about psychiatric evidence in court). There are, of course, many psychiatrists who do not share this view. It is perfectly possible for a clear-headed psychiatrist with some expertise in forensic work to give a balanced and indeed an absolutely invaluable clinical opinion in a court of law. However, one must admit that there is a tendency for the psychiatrist to regard as a patient any individual whose history he takes—under whatever circumstances. The word "malingering" is conspicuously absent from the index of several standard textbooks on psychiatry, and we all know of appalling instances where the lying statements of criminals were given spurious authenticity by being incorporated in the text

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a psychiatrist's report as though they were matters of fact.

Readers of Freud will recall that his theory of hysteria rested on the basis of accounts of sexual assaults in infancy, revealed during analysis, which were later shown to have been entirely fabricated by the rather curious patients concerned. However, psycho-analytic casuistry enabled Freud to preserve the fabric of his theory intact—by the simple expedient of substituting the *fantasy* of assault for its *reality* as the prime cause of subsequent developments. Freudians have quoted this as an example of the master's genius, though there are of course alternative interpretations. At any rate it is hardly surprising that the judge in court has so often to point out that the psychiatric assessment is based in essence on what the person examined told the psychiatrist, and that if the subject of the examination is endeavouring to escape from the consequences of a criminal act, to avoid an unpalatable social responsibility, or even to elicit sympathy, it would be as stupid to regard his statements about himself and his feelings as necessarily valid evidence as it would be to accept without question a criminal's uncorroborated account of his crime. I have also observed that, even outside a medico-legal situation, quite sophisticated psychiatrists in search of a psychological basis for a mental illness will cheerfully accept the patient's (usually creditable) account of the origin of his troubles, even though the same doctor would contemptuously brush aside the patient's equally insupportable theories as to the origin of his gallstones or cerebral thrombosis. Unless one accepts that psychogenesis is a game for amateurs the two situations seem to be not absolutely different.

A FURTHER VEXED ISSUE concerns how far the psychiatrist should permit his subject to be used, loosely and sometimes cynically, to ensure the smooth working of society. The term "psychopathic personality" lost its meaning in the Hitler war because it was used as a medical label for ridding the armed forces of inadequate or uncontrollable soldiers. Whether we lost much thereby is another matter. The term shares with some other psychiatric categories all the vices of a circular definition: irresponsible behaviour is caused by psychopathy, which is a diagnosis based on the subject's irresponsible behaviour. In this context no great harm was done. It was more important to ensure the survival of civilisation than to worry about terminology. However, in peace-time, the psychiatrist should perhaps be less ready to act as a garbage can for the problems of society and the law in connection with anti-social behaviour. If the middle-aged shoplifter is genuinely suffering from an agitated depression, hospital treatment is more appropriate than prison; but this does not justify the speculative attribution of all stealing and swindling to mental disease. What society does is to make the most convenient common-sense disposal of such cases. If the blanket application of any particular theory were shown to yield a better pragmatic result it would no doubt be hailed with relief as the basis of forensic practice; but so far there is no such glow on the horizon.

Nevertheless, the psychiatrist's willingness to regard as a patient anyone from whom he takes a history leads to considerable abuse. His appearance in Court to give evidence in a case of marital conflict after having talked to only one member of the marriage deprives his opinion of any conceivable value. It is probably of little value anyway. The fact that two people decide that they do not wish to spend more time together does not prove they are mad or ill, even in the mildest way. But a psychiatrist who gives an opinion in such a case without seeing both partners brings ridicule on his subject. He has in any case nothing to offer in this situation unless mental illness is present.

I WOULD DRAW special attention to three current fashions in psychiatry that may contribute to its abuse.

Medical thought is, of course, notoriously susceptible to fashion, even in the tangible realms of physical disease. Where focal sepsis and auto-intoxication once held sway, the more sophisticated concepts of auto-immunity now reign, and the idea that the patient has become sensitised to his own tissues is currently used to "explain" a wide range of diseases. Like all such explanations it is directed to elucidating the intermediate steps in the chain of events that constitutes the development of a disease, rather than to identifying prime causes; and like all such explanations it contains a hard kernel of truth. Psychiatry is at least as vulnerable to fashion as any other branch of medicine.

I would draw attention first to the concept of social psychiatry, to the vogue it enjoys here at some cost to the clinical approach, and to the way in which with characteristic American thoroughness it is tending in some circles to dis-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place the rather tarnished image of psychoanalysis as the mascot of the American academic psychiatrist.

I would be the last person to discourage epidemiological research, to which I have devoted many years of effort. There can be no doubt that this can display trends in differential prevalence and incidence; it can reveal broadly operative contributory causal factors; and it can pinpoint sensitive areas suitable for more intensive and definitive investigation either in the clinic or the laboratory. It has, for example, fully confirmed the powerful influence of the cigarette in the causation of chronic bronchitis, arterial disease, and coronary thrombosis, as well as cancer of the lung. Occasionally, also, epidemiological serendipity will unveil a truly significant rather than a merely contributory aetiological causal agent: the relationship of maternal German measles to congenital deformity in the baby is an outstanding recent example. More than this, epidemiological studies sharpen precision in diagnosis and encourage the formulation of those operational classifications that are needed to establish real differences and similarities between clinical categories. However, it must be clearly kept in mind that valid studies of illness within a community can be carried out only where there is already a firm and widely agreed basis of clinical diagnosis and classification, which is far from the case in psychiatry at the present time. Even the best of such attempts have often had to place undue and sometimes ludicrous reliance on the empirical quantification of symptoms. To grade subjective sensations on a numerical scale represents an attempt to achieve some approach to objectivity, and an advance on simple diagnostic labelling; but it emphasises the credibility gap between clinical research in this and simpler fields of medical investigation. What sort of effective classification could the heart specialist, for example, have developed if he were solely and entirely dependent on his patient's story, without the evidence yielded by physical examination, to say nothing of the crucial assistance of radiological, electrical and other ancillary methods of diagnosis? Furthermore, while epidemiological study can certainly yield useful information it is naive to expect it often to yield final answers. To shift the basis of psychiatry from medicine to general sociology on present evidence is to move from the well-lit contours of hard knowledge and clear definition into the half-light of a subject that is in its infancy, that is imprecise, that is still desperately short of basic data, and that is itself still groping for its first principles and for a clearly defined role in the scientific galaxy.

THE SECOND EQUALLY DANGEROUS TREND is the deliberate inflation of psychiatry from its preoccupation with the study and treatment of mental illness to what has been euphemistically termed "the science of behaviour." I have already expressed reservations as to the extent to which the psychiatrist's experience of the abnormal can reasonably be used as a guide to general behaviour, and the description of psychiatry as comprising the "science of behaviour" can be described only as a piece of remarkable arrogance. Of course all human behaviour can be described in the psychiatrist's terminology. Equally it can be described in the terms and concepts of the anthropologist, the sociologist, the historian, the economist—or even the practical politician. In psychiatric terms Hitler was a hysterical psychopath; to the literary historian he epitomised the dark aggressive mysticism of the German soul; to the economist he was a front man for big business who unfortunately got out of hand; to the politician a potentially convenient but ultimately uncontrollable complication of the European balance of power. There is some truth in all these views and in others; but I see no conceivable reason why the psychiatrist's monarchy of the kingdom of the abnormal should endow his particular synthesis with any overriding virtue.

THE LATEST FASHION IN PSYCHIATRY—or it might be safer to say the penultimate fashion, since fashions succeed one another so rapidly that I am probably already out of date—is to divorce the subject entirely from medicine and to regard mental illness as a matter exclusively of the individual personality and his inter-personal relations. This view, which in its more bizarre manifestations regards the schizophrenic's family as more abnormal than the schizophrenic, light-heartedly begs the question of psychogenesis, and accepts disturbed inter-personal relations as the cause of mental illness on the basis of affirmation alone and without troubling to adduce the kind of evidence that would be demanded in any other field of medicine. It also comfortingly absolves the investigator from the hard exercise of diagnostic classification, and the search for other aetiological agents. It con-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

verts therapy into a miasma of well-motivated and mostly bumbling interference with complex relationships subjectively assessed by a mind with no verifiable basis of authentic professionalism. Attributing everything to psychogenesis, it ignores the enzyme and the toxic chemical, or any of the other agents by which mental disturbances can be predictably provoked.

If the rest of medicine had restricted its aetiological hypotheses to those based on "interpersonal relationships" it could also have built a precarious edifice of similar causation for gallstones, piles, and baldness. It would be characterised by a vast, sprawling and inconsequential literature and it would never have developed the sleeping tablet, to say nothing of the antibiotic.

YOU WILL OBSERVE that the real issue concerns the use of the term *mental illness*. As in the case of physical illness the definition has a social as well as a semantic importance. All of us have physical and mental disabilities and for all of us they increase with advancing years. Every one of us has psychiatric symptoms. We are all symptomatic neurotics, but for the most part we endure our symptoms and expect treatment only when interference with our work or social function transforms us from symptomatic to social neurotics. And all of us occasionally magnify disabilities of both kinds to obtain our own ends. Such exaggerations range from fabricating a sick headache or pleading normal fatigue to avoid an unattractive social engagement, to simulating more serious disability for more serious purposes—madness to escape imprisonment.

The practitioner of internal medicine is fallible, but probably more sparing than the psychiatrist in bestowing the accolade of illness with its consequent privileges. This, I believe, is where he is most abused. It is axiomatic that the depressive patient should not be told to pull himself together and get on with the job. However, there are many circumstances when the patient with less serious psychiatric symptoms needs to be told quite clearly that they are no more important than the low back pains that trouble so many of his contemporaries, or the bunions that worry the rest.

I am fortunate that the psychiatrists with whom I have worked have been prepared to say this, and to make the rarest of all psychiatric diagnoses—that there is nothing seriously wrong with the patient and nothing requiring psychiatric treatment. If such self-denying stringency were more widely cultivated, abuse of the psychiatrist at every level of society would be less conspicuous.

Waiting

I opened the linen-cupboard
And found him counting every stitch of
his shroud.
And in the loft
The dying news was read to my brother.
My elder twin was waiting and flying,
A guillotined feather on the night-road.

Sitting in the pantry I wasn't done
With compote and jams.
I told him to wait
And gave him a pastry-cook
Conical hat tall as a heaven.

Here is the starched hat
And the apron of my brother.
In his new uniform
He grapples with me.
Here is the stitch of longing
In the shroud of my brother.

Dennis Silk

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Colette

Some Places

Pages from a Notebook

Marrakesh

DAZZLE of stars and orange-trees. Throbbing of nightingales, twinkling of starlight. The perfume of the orange smothers everything. The grape-fruit in flower has a lingering sweetness that the orange lacks.

The twittering of birds before dawn, a great rushing of birds. After daybreak a cadence of the nightingale echoes still, a fragment of the night. At first light the swallow utters her piercing cry. Then the liquid throaty gurgling of the common oriole and the blackbird. The last songs rise from a damp shingle whose every pebble is the sound of a sparrow and the kisses, kisses, kisses of myriad tomtits. . . .

At noon all fall silent except the dove, always invisible, who murmurs tirelessly through the heat.

THE BARE WALL, flat garden, low firm divan. Surfaces where the eye can wander, the body twist and turn. The irritation of a crease, disgust with a climbing lane. Close by, near the sleeping fountain, an unpleasantly raucous American laugh ruffles the blackbirds' plumage. What's more, this American woman is wearing a chiffon dress printed with a map of Paris. Fact.

ILLUSION of having reached a goal because one is resting in the middle of an enclosed garden, with only mute signs of human penetration, traces that leave no sound on the air. How long can the illusion last? "I've come to the very end. . . ." The end of what? Life? Desire? Movement? Love? How long can one browse in the contemplation of a secret garden, a filigree of fine metalwork against a leafy background? How much time can one spend in waiting for the wind at last to stir the rigid, immense torch of a cypress that seems to buttress an angle of the house and create the illusion that the palace itself is swaying?

For today, and the two previous days, the illusion has lasted. It is simply that luxury beguiles one's sense of everyday life; and here, as elsewhere, luxury is stillness and silence.

Who can say what a palace is like before going inside? It is a wall like every other wall, the colour of pale twilight, the colour of earth, the colour of the sky. The men who sit under the portals resemble all the men of these parts beneath every Moroccan portal.

At the end of the unpaved passage the small rectangular cloister is so plain and cool and deserted. A chanting of prayers betrays a tiny little mosque, built by the Pasha and

COLETTE (*who died in Paris in 1954 at the age of 81*) *published over fifty books, but many of her personal notebooks and travel diaries have never been translated. These pages—so redolent of a dead Empire—are taken from "Places," a selection translated by David Le Vay which will shortly be published by Peter Owen.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reserved for him and his immediate neighbours. No guards or servants to be seen, only the outline of a man dreaming against a door.... It puts out an arm to the door, which opens. Again a narrow passage with the beginning of a mosaic surface. At the end of the passage a tall man, all in white, El Hadj Thami Glaou.

The large sunken almost fearful eyes of a dreamer. The small capricious chin of unrestrained violence. We can learn nothing of such a man, save for his studied gentleness, his perfect—almost wordless—politeness; for he knows nothing of the French language and stands on ceremony because of this lack, like a cat who will not drink while watched. He understand everything, or nearly everything. He says little; Samuel ben Rimoj translates.

He leads us through the long cool rooms, furnished with divans and scented by burning cedar and coumarin wood.

His own room is a long narrow rectangle, perfume-filled and flanked by divans with white silk cushions and seats. A bed, all veiled in white gauze and embroidered in soft pink—the bed of Clara d'Ellébeuse—is where the ruler of thousands sleeps. His hand, dark against the white curtain, indicates the couch....

Dinner in the oriental style, under garish electric light, Dufayel chandeliers, beside a telephone fixed to the mosaic.

THE REAL LUXURY—all there is to be seen, perhaps—is the slaves. Seven or eight women busy themselves round our dining-table of five places. Beautiful tall negresses, glossier than any fruit, and dressed in immaculate fabrics, they manoeuvre in their great skirts like ships on a calm sea. But the fascinating Chleuhs, the colour of barely tinted ivory, have fine compressed mouths, narrow noses and small aristocratic hands and feet. Nothing of Africa in them. Is there any creature more European than a young Chleuh dancer, with her Spanish nose and delicate lip?

After the meal she dances while plucking at a small stringed instrument and another Chleuh sings, stroking a similar instrument with a bow. A third Chleuh sings also; this one is darker, as attractive as a beautiful Italian girl. Their song is a "mountain entertainment," not unlike one from the Tyrol....

THREE FLIGHTS of mosaic stairs. I am supported, carried along, by two pairs of female arms.

But the two gay recluses are not used to climbing or hurrying; afterwards they rest a hand on a heaving, plump breast. One is already done for, enormous with pendulous cheeks; the other is still charming, with small teeth, a frank childlike gaze, expressive little hands with carefully-tended bright red nails. One can only guess at the body beneath the abundant heavy fabrics, fashioned like the dresses of the Second Empire. Cut blue velvet reveals a second robe of heavy rose, floral and magnificent. Over the shoulders straps of violet silk interwoven with long lozenges of gold, support sleeves of silk brocade. Moroccan head-dress, with silken fringes displaying the ears, a golden plaque above the forehead. This forehead plaque is embossed with fine diamonds; the pear-shaped brilliants dangling from the ears are very European.

The long salon is hung with deeply reflecting silky Lyons velvet. Standing around us or bent over their mint tea, splendid—almost gigantic—negresses laugh silently.

A Moroccan Luncheon

"AZIL!"

Si-Kassem never had to call twice. She stood beside the door, leaning her shoulder on its cedar frame. She ran on bare feet with heels and nails of a dusky pink. She ran with her skirt in great folds, sprigged with white muslin embroidered with small flowers. Each time she brought a new offering: a straw pagoda, tented with velvet and braided with gold, sheltering round loaves of pure wheat flavoured with aniseed; cov-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ered dishes of red clay with a conical lid pierced by a smoking chimney, or perhaps some ewers. The ewer for washing and its copper basin, made in Fez, chiselled in rich yellow metal; the English ewer lined with silvered glass, from whose insulating walls poured bluish water from a spring that welled up from the ground a few yards away. There were six of us, seated in Turkish style round the low table. None of us drank from the contents of the water carafe during the meal; we knew that merely rinsing the mouth would preserve our appetite for a good Moroccan meal that we had learned to appreciate. . . .

"Azil!"

A silken scarf, modelled like a Parisian hat, revealed nothing of her hair. Azil was young and zealous and did not allow herself to smile. Her soft cheeks and bare round arms captured the blue from without whenever she passed the bay-window opening on to the sea. Azil mirrored the blue of the sky, the green of foliage; from each ear a glass pendant swung to its own bluish reflection on her strong neck. Azil was beautiful like a polished jar, beautiful like a young seal, beautiful like any well-treated, well-fed, sixteen-year-old slave.

She had already placed before us pale girdle-cakes soaked in sugared butter and sprinkled with almonds; pigeons bathed in succulent juice with green olives, chick-peas melting in flour, sweet onions; chickens buried under fresh beans with wrinkled skins and lemon cooked and re-cooked and reduced to a savoury puree. We had also had mutton, and mutton again, and once more; mutton stuffed with fennel, mutton with cumin and courgettes, mutton with twenty spices; and an exquisite diversion—girdle-cakes flaky to the limit of flakiness, rendered transparent, concealing a soft nugget of minced fowl, sugared and flavoured with nutmeg.

So WHAT ABOUT all this sugar in dishes we customarily salt? Allow me to insert a laudatory parenthesis. Good Moroccan cooking—and I have perfect native hospitality in mind—has its secretly tried principles. It relies extensively on various dishes cooked on damped-down fires, in which—thanks to olive-oil—no one notices the lack of butter. As for the use of sugar in the main dishes, let me for a moment leave my Moroccan meal and slyly select a recipe from one of the best manuals of French cuisine, a little volume published in 1839. I choose from a hundred others, a recipe for "shoulders of mutton *en musette*":

"Remove all the bones from two shoulders of mutton and halve them; put the shoulders together, season inside with salt, pepper and fine spices; truss; lard the outer parts, coat with a layer of cooked forcemeat, *sugar the whole as desired*. Garnish with gherkins and truffles, lightly embedded in the forcemeat. Leave to cook in a braising-pan with a little ham, cover with slices of fat bacon and grease-proof paper, leave to cook on a slow fire. . . ."

I omit the details of glazing and dressing, which end with this ambiguous recommendation: "It is advisable to cover with a full-bodied Spaniard or a reduced Italian," and return to the surroundings of Tangiers. But not without repeating that "sugar as desired" recurs in many an ancient recipe for braised and stewed meats; and that sugar is indispensable for any dish that takes more than an hour to cook. There is no question of sugaring your purple steak or blue cutlet, of which I partake only rarely.

CEASELESSLY Azil fetched and carried the red bowls. The spring vegetables took pride of place—broad beans, asparagus, new peas in a pot decorated with orange-trees, artichokes round as roses; small turnips, marrows and carrots appeared under swelling yellow enamel, with whole eggs broken over the dish a quarter of an hour before serving. Finally came *couscous*, at once soft and granular—*couscous*, discreet harbinger of dessert and fruit—*couscous* with a surrounding rampart, a small fortress, of sweet onions and muscat grapes swollen to the sweating-point, *couscous* and bowls of barely soured buttermilk. We lifted our heads, we began

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to look at the sea, beyond an abyss of greenery tumbling to the shore.

They have vagabond, noble, disinterested souls who commit themselves to a motionless siesta on divans stuffed with fine wool and contemplate the Mediterranean through half-closed eyes. Already we can hear the water simmering in the bowls of the samovar. Faithful to tradition, our host rises to prepare the green mint tea. And if, simultaneously, we all turn to watch Azil of the black and pink feet, it is not because she seems more beautiful as she runs unburdened, it is because she is bringing to our host—oh, that odour that touches the throat with an iced finger, which plumbs the depths of the lungs, tells of snow and subtle pepper, wakens the spirits and deludes thirst!—a green bunch of crinkled mint.

The Pasha's Audience

IT IS THUS that God the Father dispenses justice—if He exists. Also, He is handsome, vast, good, robust, ancient, ageless and majestic. Also, He judges the poor. At the Last Judgment He, too, will say to the trembling bundle of rags, collapsed to kiss the ground:

"I pardon you for having stolen that small handful of beans from a garden, for you might well have been hungry."

But the Pasha detains—by the hand of the Avenging Angel, armed with a rod, huge, sombre, carrying the culprits suspended by the hair from his indifferent wrist—he detains the other thief:

"You have stolen beans and been caught selling them. So you did not steal from necessity. You will meditate on your crime in prison for two days."

At intervals the Pasha sniffs delicately, as if his subtle nostril could detect the odours of innocence accused and crime concealed. Four arms-smugglers, prostrated at his feet (clad in soft wool), deny having sold the Rif a quantity of rifles. Three of the traffickers stay silent, leaving the fourth as spokesman, a grinning bewildered Arab unmoved by the white majesty of the Pasha or the clairvoyance of the French assessor (Captain T.), who acts as a public servant. The Arab, the colour of Fez clay, talks raspingly, using the whole linguistic gamut of adroit, eloquent Arab hands. The consignment of arms had been spotted in Marrakesh and in Fez and had then melted away to the North like a dream.

"No proof," said the Pasha, "but it was no business of any of you to peddle rifles. Get back to your own tribes down in the Souss. And don't enter the city gates again."

He listens unmoved to the rising protests from the prostrate *djellabahs*. Squatting in oriental fashion, his back against an ordinary plank, he is radiant, silver-bearded, draped in light-coloured wool, with luminous great blue eyes showing where some blood alliance has disturbed the Arab night.

"You were drunk," he says to a young man. "Twenty-five francs for the crime of drunkenness."

"I wasn't drinking," shrills the accused Moroccan, dressed like a Frenchman in a dirty overcoat.

The Pasha extends a delicate hand towards the Angel:

"Smell him."

The Angel seizes the red-capped head and throws it back, then bends his scimitar of a nose over the anxiously open mouth.

"He stinks of it!" declares the Angel.

He smells. He must pay.

NOW IT'S THE TURN of the mad mystic.

The madman stands with his tall dry body silhouetted against the light, reminiscent in his rags of the first Crusade. He is burdened with thirty wooden rosaries, from his neck down to his mud-encrusted feet, each bead larger than a plover's egg. Under his red hat his hair and beard are pale with ancient dust and he brandishes "the spear of St. John." At Marrakesh he has been stealing, provoking scandal and pricking Jewish backsides. Marrakesh expelled him and he's been seen on every track between Marrakesh and Fez among the marigolds, the wild arums, the poppies and bluets; charged, according to him, with a divine mission, the madman—

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perhaps I should say the Holy Man—continued to pierce the backsides of Jews. Fez has received him on condition that he attends the Pasha's audience twice a month to answer for his conduct.

"What have you been up to?" asks the snow-white Pasha.

"Nothing."

"You have pricked the backsides of Jews."

"That is my mission."

A few days in prison suffice.

But the wild figure stirs excitedly, the thirty wooden necklaces clattering in a halo of reddish dust. The Holy Man wishes to speak, if only to anathematise us all.

"I . . . I should like to see my wife," moans the missionary hollowly.

"Your wife is in Marrakesh," answers the Pasha, "and, besides, you are a Holy Man and have no need of a wife."

"It's true that I am holy. But it's precisely the want of a woman that threatens to annul my holiness."

He turns his head and his dusty mop of hair from side to side and his great blank eyes search for Jewish backsides.

HERE, KISSING THE GROUND side by side, are a sorcerer and a disgruntled husband. The pale, tormented husband alleges that the sorcerer promised to tell his wife's fortune. But first the wife had to hand over her jewels to him—the trouble is that the sorcerer kept them. The tale drags on with fluttering manual commentary. Gradually the sorcerer, at first silent and disdainful, begins to laugh in a manner showing him to be a true sorcerer, a laugh that reveals square white teeth, a conquering, impudent, irresistible laugh. What a delightful sorcerer! Even the presence of his own wife, whining, snuffling, veiled, does not make him at all downcast. Then Zeineb, too, accuses her sorcerer husband:

"Yes, he's a sorcerer all right! Yes, he stole the jewels! And he slept with the plaintiff's wife, and so-and-so's wife, and another's, and this Hanoum and that Hanoum. . . ."

What do I hear? French names! The sorcerer laughs more than ever. And when he laughs his eyes—almost closed—show caressing and ironic between curved eyelashes; two shiny curling locks of hair shadow his cheeks; under his *djellabah* there is a gleam of white linen—it's obvious that he's a sorcerer, a sorcerer, a sorcerer!

The Pasha motions Zeineb to silence.

"If I am to adjudicate wisely in all this I must concern myself only with the matter of the jewel theft. For the rest is nothing but women's gossip and to take account of that would make one dizzy. Remove this Zeineb and bring me the black slave who took the jewels to the sorcerer."

During the ensuing pause the just Pasha rests his gaze momentarily on the roses in the courtyard. A cool breeze stirs the long pendants of datura flowers. Flowers, clouds, untamed birds, these are the friends of this wise and powerful man who passed his youth far from the city, shared the wild tribal life and regrets the peace of boundless horizons. He seems to sail like a summer cloud on his bank of folded carpets. But it was a horse which felt the weight of this body filled with a noble spirit, when the Pasha left, at the age of sixty-nine, to bring back to Fez, to us, to France, the disturbed tribesmen who spread like an uncertain wave. He brought them back, after combat, pardoned and punished; and, as his horse galloped joyfully, two baskets of severed rebel heads swung from his saddle.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sentiments From Sumer

My wife is thanking God for all he has given her;
My mother is prostrate beside the sacred river;
There is not, I think, much hope of dinner.

*

She had a baby without being laid,
He had a belly without eating bread. . . .
I am telling you what they said.

*

One hand rising upon the other
Built this man's house;
One belly piled on another
Brought it to dust.

*

Naked, cross-legged,
The sweating tailor stitches,
That other men may strut
In robes and britches.

Those who labour to create beauty,
Make others fair, themselves stay dirty.

*

A king? What's that to me?
A lord? Oh, stop your chatter!
A tax-collector? Ah, my friend!
That is a serious matter.

*

So soon we die,
Best spend every penny!
So long we live,
Best save many!

*

Getting married is a joy, of course,
Unequalled till the moment of divorce.

*

A prisoner-of-war! Oh,
Tethered by the nose
He stumbles by; just so go I,
In bond to wife and child.

*

It is desert fare that makes a man,
It is a shoe that points his way,
It is a wife that writes his fate,
A daughter that consoles his age;
It is a son that shields his head,
A son's wife that breaks his heart.

Nigel Dennis

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arthur Koestler

Literature & the Law of Diminishing Returns

IN SOLZHENITSYN'S novel *The First Circle* some people are discussing scientific progress. Suddenly one of them, Gleb Nerzhin, bursts out:

> Progress! Who wants progress? That's just what I like about art—the fact that there can't be any "progress" in it. For example—in the seventeenth century there was Rembrandt, and nobody can improve on him, whereas seventeenth-century technology now looks very crude to us. . . .

He then talks about the tremendous advances in engineering since the 1870s, and reflects: "But has there been any advance on *Anna Karenina*, which was written at that time?"

The opposite attitude was taken by Sartre in his essay "What is Literature?", where he compared books with bananas which one can enjoy only while they are fresh. *Anna Karenina*, on this view, must have rotted long ago. The same attitude is expressed in a more provocative manner by spokesmen of the *nouveau roman* and other *avant-garde* groups, including some of the more articulate student-rebels. It is summed up in an epigrammatic statement by Antonin Artaud: "The masterpieces of the past are for the past; they are not for us."

Solzhenitsyn's hero reflects the conventional view that science progresses in a cumulative manner, brick upon brick, the way a tower is built, whereas art is timeless, a dance of coloured balls on the jets of a fountain, playing variations on a few eternal themes. If you accept this view, then it is pointless to search for any objective criteria of "progress" in poetry, painting or drama; art, then, does not evolve, it merely formulates and reformulates the same archetypal experience in the idiom of the period; and though the vocabulary is subject to changes—including the optical vocabulary of the painter—the statement contained in a great work of art remains valid and unmarked by time's arrow.

The opposite view—that works of the past were good for the past, but are not good enough for the present—implies that art *does* progress and evolve. One cannot simply reject Tolstoy or Rembrandt or Etruscan painting on the relativistic grounds that they speak in an idiom *different* from ours; rejection implies the belief that we have discovered forms of expression that are more pertinent and valid than those of the past. Some spokesmen of the *avant-garde* of our time, and of the *avant-garde* of past times have in fact asserted at the top of their voices that they were the torch-bearers of objective progress in art—Impressionists, Expressionists, Abstractionists; and there is hardly a writer, past or present, who did not or does not believe in his heart of hearts his style and technique of writing to be closer to reality, both intellectually and emotionally, than those of the past. Let us face it: our reverence for Homer or Goethe is sweetened by a touch of condescension not unlike out attitude to infant prodigies: how clever they were for their age! how almost modern!

THE BELIEF THAT the art forms of the present are superior, or at least in some respects superior, to those of the past can be carried to grotesque extremes. For example, *The Guardian* published some time ago an article on "Universities of the Future" which summarised the attitude of the rebellious students as follows:

THIS *is the text of Arthur Koestler's recent Cheltenham Lecture.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> The university is there to study the future.... Who needs the odes of Horace, of Marvell, of Keats? The absolute effective model of beat poetry or guitar poetry has made their pretended virtues only too relative.

But leaving such extremes aside, one's sympathies are unavoidably divided—or rather, they alternate—between the two camps: between the Gleb Nerzhins who hold that art is untouched by the vulgar march of progress, and those others who consider art as a kind of Olympic Games, where, thanks to improved techniques, athletes every four years produce new records. (Remember Hemingway boasting that he was still the champ.) As usual in such controversies, one suspects that both parties are guilty of bath-waterism—throwing away the opponent's baby with the bath.

Let me side-step for a moment from literature to the visual arts. This is an old gambit already used by Quintilian in the first century. To explain the development of Latin oratory from its erstwhile austerity to its flowery "modern" style, Quintilian compared it to the progress of Greek sculpture from archaic rigidity to the smoothness and grace of the fourth century B.C. I am going to use a similar trick, and quote my favourite art historian, E. H. Gombrich, in support of the view that there can be cumulative progress in art, as there is in science:

> In antiquity the discussion of painting and sculpture inevitably centred on [the] imitation [of nature]—mimesis. Indeed it may be said that the progress of art towards that goal was to the ancient what the progress of techniques is to the modern: the model of progress as such. Thus Pliny told the history of sculpture and painting as the history of inventions, assigning definite achievements in the rendering of nature to individual artists: the painter Polygnotus was the first to represent people with open mouth and with teeth, the sculptor Pythagoras was the first to render nerves and veins, the painter Nikias was concerned with light and shade. The history of these years [550 to 350] B.C. as it is reflected in Pliny or Quintilian was handed down like an epic of conquest, a story of inventions.... In the Renaissance it was Vasari who applied this technique to the history of the arts of Italy from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Vasari never fails to pay tribute to those artists of the past who made a distinct contribution, as he saw it, to the mastery of representation. "Art rose from humble beginnings to the summit of perfection" [Vasari says] because such natural geniuses as Giotto blazed the trail and others were thus enabled to build on their achievements.[1]

Here, it seems, is the historic refutation of Nerzhin's thesis of the timelessness of art. "If I could see further than others," said Newton, "it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants." Leonardo might have said the same—and he actually did: "It is a wretched pupil," he wrote, "who does not surpass his master." Dürer and others expressed similar opinions. But if we take them literally, we again land in absurdity. What they evidently meant was that during the period of explosive development which started with Giotto around the year 1300, each successive generation of painters had discovered new tricks and techniques—foreshortening, perspective, the treatment of light, colour and texture, the capture of movement and facial expression—inventions which the pupil could take over from the master and use as his base-line for new departures.

BUT TWO QUALIFICATIONS come immediately to mind. The first is that this cumulative growth refers to the accretion of technical skills, and can only be called "progress" if technical perfection is your criterion of judging a work of art. If your criteria are different, you may prefer archaic Greek figures to Golden Age statuary, or the Italian Primitives to the High Renaissance The second objection to Leonardo's optimism is that it applies only to certain periods and not to others. In the whole history of Western art, there are two outstanding periods in which we find rapid, sustained, cumulative progress in representing nature, as tangible as the progress in engineering. The first stretches roughly from the middle of the 6th to the middle of the 4th century B.C., the second from the beginning of the 14th to the middle of the 16th century. Each lasted for about six to eight generations, in the course of which each giant did indeed stand on the shoulders of his predecessors, and could take in a wider view. It would of course be silly to say that these were the *only* periods of cumulative progress and to ignore, for instance, the visual discoveries of the Impressionists. But it is nevertheless true that in between these periods of rapid evolution there are much longer stretches of stagnation and decline. Besides, there are the *Einzelgänger*, the lone giants, who seem to appear from nowhere and

[1] E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (1962), pp. 9, 120.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cannot be fitted into any neat pyramid of acrobats balancing on each other's shoulders in the circus of history.

What are we to conclude? I think we ought to conclude that Nerzhin is certainly wrong—that there *is* progress in art in a limited sense, in limited directions during limited periods. But these short, luminous trails sooner or later peter out, and all around them there is twilight and confusion.

There is, however, comfort in the thought that the historical chart of the evolution of science does not offer a more coherent picture. When Nerzhin points to the contrast between the development of painting and that of technology since Rembrandt's day, he cheats, because the cumulative growth of science happens to start precisely in Rembrandt's century, which is also the century of Galileo, Kepler and Newton—but not before. It was only during these last three hundred years or thereabouts that the progress of science has been continuous and cumulative; but those unfamiliar with the history of science—and they include the majority of scientists—tend to fall into the mistaken belief that the acquisition of knowledge has always been a neat and tidy ascent along a straight path towards the ultimate peak.

In fact, however, neither art nor science have evolved in a continuous way. Whitehead once remarked that Europe in the year 1500 knew less than Archimedes who died in the year 212 B.C. In retrospect there was only one step separating Archimedes from Galileo, or Aristarchus of Samos from Copernicus. But that step took nearly two thousand years to be made. During that long period, science was hibernating. After the three short glorious centuries of Greek science, roughly coinciding with the cumulative period of Greek art, comes a period of hibernation about six times as long; then a new furious awakening, so far only about ten generations old. And even during the luminous periods, when logical objectivity and detached reasoning were supposed to have prevailed, history echoes with the sound and fury of scientific controveries even more venomous than the squabbles among literati. It's a comfort.

PROGRESS, THEN, in science as in art, is neither steady nor absolute, but progress in a limited sense during limited periods in limited directions; not along a steady curve, but in a jagged, jerky, *zig-zag* line. And yet I believe that it is possible to detect a recurrent rhythm or pattern in the evolution of both science and art. Think, for instance, of the succession of major literary trends in Western Europe in the course of the last two centuries: classicism; romanticism and *Sturm und Drang*; the naturalistic novel; surrealism and Dada; the socially conscious novel; the slice-of-life novel; existentialism; the *nouveau roman*. It is of course impossible to isolate in the strict sense any literary movement or school of thought; there is always interaction and overlap; but nevertheless each of these movements had an individual profile and life cycle.

As a rule the life cycle starts with a passionate rebellion against, and rejection of, the previous dominant school, and a breakthrough towards new frontiers. The second phase in the cycle moves through a climate of optimism and euphoria in the footsteps of the conquering giants. Their followers move into the newly opened territories to explore and exploit their rich potentials. This is the phase *par excellence* of the cumulative progress described earlier on; a time for consolidating new insights, for elaborating and perfecting new styles and techniques. The third phase brings saturation, followed by frustration and decline. The fourth and last phase is a time of desperate experimentation and anarchy, which prepares the next revolution, initiating a new departure in a new direction, and so the cycle starts again.

LET ME, BRIEFLY, DWELL on the first phase. The French Revolution demolished the Bastille and used its huge stones to pave the Place de la Concorde. In other words, revolutions are both destructive and constructive. Old restraints and conventions are discarded, aspects of human experience previously neglected or repressed are suddenly highlighted, there is a shift of emphasis, a reshuffling of data, a reordering of the hierarchy of values and of the criteria of relevance. This is what happened at each of the turning-points of narrative prose styles—classicism to romanticism, naturalism, and so on. This is what happened in the succession of dramatic changes in the artist's perception of the human body, from Egyptian painting to Picasso; or in the poet's view of the relation between the sexes; or the painter's attitude to nature. Throughout the Renaissance, up to the late Venetians, landscapes were conceived as more or less stereotyped backdrops for the human figures on the stage. Art his-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

torians appear to agree that Giorgione's "Tempest" is the first European painting in which nature claims to be seen in her own right—the violent thunderstorm in the background competes for our attention with the bucolic scene in the foreground.

Literature was even slower in coming to grips with nature in the raw. In his *History of Modern Aesthetics*, Listowel wrote:

> Considering the bulk and value of Greek literature, and the artistic brilliance of Athens, the feeling for nature . . . was but poorly developed among a people whose achievement in the dramatic and sculptural arts has been unsurpassed; it is seriously lacking in Homer . . . and it can hardly be said to enter Greek drama. . . . Indeed, the continent of nature had to wait for a thorough and minute exploration until the romantic movement of the nineteenth century: Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Goethe, first brought the ocean, the rivers, and the mountain ranges into their own.[2]

Even Dr. Johnson dismissed mountains as "rather uncouth objects."

This does not mean that artists who painted before Giorgione were blind to nature, or that poets before the romantic movement were lacking in emotive response. But their vision and response were different from ours, moulded by the *Zeitgeist*, just as successive schools of philosophers put different interpretations on the same data. To Homer a storm at sea signified the fury of Poseidon, and the dawn was painted by the rosy fingers of Aurora; to Virgil nature appeared tame and bucolic; it took quite a series of revolutionary shifts of emphasis and reshuffling of data until people learnt to see an apple through Cezanne's eye or a snow-covered plain through the eyes of Verlaine. And the adjective "revolutionary" is no exaggeration, although in retrospect these revolutions seem quite tame. Verlaine, for instance, does not seem to have been unduly audacious when he compared the uncertain colour of the snow to luminous sand covering the "interminable boredom of the plain," and the sky to dull copper in which the moon "lived and died." Today French school-children have to learn this poem by heart. But when it was published, a famous writer and critic attacked Verlaine in the shrill voice of the literary fishwife:

> How can the moon live and die in a copper heaven? And how can snow shine like sand? How can the French attribute such importance to this versifier who is far from skilful in form and most contemptible and commonplace in subject-matter?

The fishwife was Count Leo Tolstoy; the source of the quotation is his once-celebrated essay, "What is Art?"

IF WE TRY to define what these revolutions in different ages and in different art forms have in common, I would suggest that the one obvious feature they all share is a radical *shift in selective emphasis*. The artist, as the scientist, is engaged in projecting his vision of reality into a particular medium, whether the medium is paint, marble, words or mathematical equations. But the product of his efforts can never be an exact copy of reality, even if he naïvely hopes to achieve one.

In the first place, he is up against the peculiarities and limitations of his medium: the painter's canvas does not have the micro-structure of the human retina, stone lacks the plasticity of living tissue, words are symbols which do not smell, smile or bleed. In the second place, the artist's perception and outlook on the world also has its peculiarities and limitations imposed by the implicit conventions of his time. The two factors interact: there is continuous feedback from language to thought, from the clay under the sculptor's fingers to the image he is trying to materialise. The dynamic tension between the biased mind and the obstinate medium compels the artist to make decisions at every step he takes (though the decision-making need not be conscious): to select and emphasise those features of reality which he considers to be significant and to ignore those which he considers irrelevant. Some aspects of experience defy representation, some can only be rendered in a simplified or distorted way, some only at the price of sacrificing others.

The term "selective emphasis" thus always involves three related factors: selection, exaggeration, and simplification. They are at work in every province of art: in the narrative of events, historic or fictitious; in the visual representation of landscape or human figure, in portrait and caricature. But selective emphasis also operates in the scientist's laboratory. Every geographical map, every statistical diagram, every theoretical model of man or the universe is a deliberately schematised caricature of reality, based on the technique of selecting and

[2] W. F. H. Listowel, *A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics* (1933), p. 217.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

highlighting the relevant features, simplifying or ignoring others according to the criteria of relevance of that particular discipline or school of thought. In psychology, for instance, one finds radically different criteria of relevance among 19th-century introspectionists, contemporary behaviourists, Freudians, Jungians and existential psychologists, with corresponding contrasts in selective emphasis, resulting in radically different portraits of man; and the same considerations apply to the history of medicine. In physics, the paradigm of exact science, there are radical shifts from Aristotelian anthropomorphism to Newtonian mechanism, from the deterministic to the probabilistic approach, from forces to fields. Even a cursory glance at the history of science makes one realise that its criteria of relevance are liable to changes as striking as the changes of style in art; and comparisons between the two domains makes the history of art appear a little less confusing by showing us at least a dim outline of a more comprehensive pattern.

Thus the recurrent revolutionary upheavals in the content and style of literary productions can be described as shifts in the criteria of relevance and in selective emphasis. The *second* phase in the historic cycle is the exploration of the new subject-matter, the elaboration of the new styles and techniques, which need not detain us here. For it is the *third* phase in the cycle which is of special interest to (and the main headache of) every practitioner of our profession: the phase of saturation and subsequent frustration of the writer and his audience. I quoted Tolstoy's indignant outcry against Verlaine's moon dying in a copper sky; today it is hard to understand what Tolstoy got so excited about. Yesterday's daring metaphors are today's clichés. Yesterday's obscenities are today's banalities, the bourgeois is no longer *épatable*; stark sex, like the moon deprived of its mystery, turns out to be all craters and pimples.

These are inevitable consequences of a fundamental property of the nervous system. Seasoned ambulance crews no longer turn a hair at the sight of mangled casualties, and even the inmates of Auschwitz developed a degree of emotional immunity. There exists a phenomenon which psychologists call habituation. You do not hear the ticking of the clock in your room, but you hear that it has suddenly stopped. You do not feel the pressure of the chair against your back; but you do feel it when you shift your position. Nerve cells in the retina do not signal sameness, they only signal contrast. And habituation is not confined to man. Dr. Horn at Cambridge has recently found single nerve cells in the mid-brain of a rabbit which respond promptly to a tone sounded at a frequency of a thousand cycles per second, but cease to respond after several repetitions of the stimulus. Habituation to the thousand-cycle tone does not, however, prevent a strong response of the same cell when an only slightly different, nine-hundred-cycle tone is sounded. Dr. Horn presented examples of similar phenomena in animals as different as locusts, squids, and cats.[3]

If even a squid can be that blasé, how can the writer hope to fight the law of diminishing returns? The recurrent cycles of stagnation, crisis, revolution and new departure seem to be mainly caused by the progressive habituation of both artist and audience to any well-established technique, style or subject-matter, and its resulting loss of emotional appeal, of evocative power. This loss, unfortunately, is unavoidable, because once the new style has become stabilised and familiar, the reader no longer needs to exert his imagination to assimilate the message; he is deprived of the effort of re-creation and degraded to a mere consumer. There can be little doubt that the bulk of all literature, probably from Greece onwards, but certainly since the invention of the printing press, consisted of inferior consumer goods, written in the long periods of stagnation within the recurrent cycle. But this huge mass of pulp has decayed and vanished from sight; only samples of exceptional quality have survived and provide the material of the history of literature.

Any new art form, however revolutionary it seemed at first, grows after a while tired and stale; it loses its power over the audience. The staleness lies of course not in the form itself, which may be enduring, but in the consumer's jaded palate. In 1933, at the peak of the great Soviet famine, the co-operative store for foreign specialists in Kharkhov had practically nothing for sale except caviar. For several months I lived on a pound of caviar a day; you can imagine the result. The history of art could be written in terms of the artist's struggle against the deadening effects of saturation. It is not his

[3] *New Scientist* (London), 7 August 1969.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fault if he is fighting a losing battle. He may produce cheese-cake or he may produce caviar, he is nevertheless helpless against the fundamental process of habituation which operates in the rabbit's brain as in the reader's nervous system. Its effect on the artist is a growing sense of frustration, and the growing realisation—which may be conscious or not—that the conventional techniques of his time have become inadequate as a medium of communication and self-expression.

TWO OPPOSITE METHODS seem to have been tried over and again to improve communication with the audience: screaming and whispering. The first tries to impress the message on the audience by an overly direct appeal to the emotions, through tear-jerkers, melodramatics or more refined derivations of it; it tries to provide spicier fare for jaded appetites and to cover impotence by flamboyant gestures and mannerisms. In the visual arts one finds some or all of these symptoms cropping up in the successive periods of decline of Egyptian, Greek and Roman sculpture, in the manneristic styles of the late Baroque, in the choicer horrors of the Victorian age, and so on. The general trend in periods of decadence is towards the over-emphatic and the over-explicit, and need not concern us further.

The opposite method to counteract diminishing returns in the evolution of art is of much greater interest. Instead of relying on the emphatic and the explicit, it tends towards economy and implicitness. It is usual to credit the French Symbolist movement—Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud—with having initiated the shift from explicit statement to implicit suggestion, and the French Impressionist school with a parallel achievement in painting. However, this movement from the obvious to the oblique can be observed in the most varied periods and art forms as an effective antidote to satiety and decadence. Nevertheless it is worth quoting a passage in which Mallarmé outlines the programme of the Symbolist movement:

> It seems to me that there should be only allusions. The volatile image of the dreams they evoke, these make the song: the Parnassians [the classicist movement of Leconte de Lisle, Heredia, *et al.*] who make a complete demonstration of the object thereby lack mystery; *they deprive the [reader's] mind of that delicious joy of imagining that it creates.* To *name* the thing means forsaking three-quarters of a poem's enjoyment—which is derived from unravelling it gradually, by happy guesswork: to *suggest* the thing creates the dream.[4]

Yet this technique is as old as art itself. It starts with mythology. The *Bhagavad Gita* is an allegory which every Hindu scholar and mystic interprets after his own fashion; Genesis is studded with archetypal symbols; Christ speaks in parables, the Oracle in riddles, Orpheus on fiddles. The purpose is not to obscure the message; on the contrary, it is to make it more luminous by compelling the recipient to act as a fluorescent screen, to work out the implications by his own effort, to re-create it. Implicit is derived from the Latin *plicare*, and means "folded in," like a role of parchment. The implicit message has to be unfolded by the reader; he must unravel it, fill the gaps, solve riddles. But as time goes by, the reader learns to see through the tricks, the disguises became transparent, he is deprived, as Mallarmé has it, "of that delicious joy of imagining that he creates." So the writer or poet will strive towards even more disciplined economy and more subtle implications; the parchment will be rolled in even tighter.

I once called this "the law of infolding"[5]; it seems to be the most effective reply to the law of diminishing returns. It runs like a kind of *leitmotif* through the history of literature. The Homeric epics were originally broadcast by travelling bards who impersonated their heroes by voice and acting, which is the most direct and emphatic method of narration. Later on, around the 7th century B.C., the epics were consolidated in their present form, to be recited on festive occasions; by now, however, they were folded into rolls of parchment. The bard impersonated; the reciter imitated; the written word has to be deciphered. A pair of quotation marks are sufficient to symbolise the human voice, and printer's ink is generally more effective in arousing emotion than a histrionic recital. Histrionics are left to the stage and screen, but they are also subject to the law of infolding. Victorian melodrama has become a parody of its own genre, and films not more than twenty years old which moved us at the time appear now—exceptions always granted—surprisingly dated, too obvious, overacted, over-explicit. And the background music is simply incredible.

[4] S. Mallarmé, *Enquête sur l'Evolution Littéraire* (1888).
[5] *The Act of Creation* (1964).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The writer's best friend is his pair of scissors. In his advice to a young writer Hemingway wrote: "The more bloody good stuff you cut out, the more bloody good your novel will be...." The law of infolding demands that the reader should never be given something for nothing; he must be made to pay in emotional currency by exerting his imagination. Otherwise one gets the dreaded "so what?" reaction. "Caroline felt her heart go out to Peter." So what? Let it go out. The German word for composing poetry is *dichten*—to compress. But compression can also operate in semantic space, by squeezing several meanings, or levels of meaning, into a single statement. Freud thought that this was the essence of poetry; Empson's "seven types of ambiguity" are variations on the same theme. Needless to say, the techniques of infolding can be used in a fraudulent manner to create deliberate obscurity. It has been said that the Venus of Milo would lose much of her attraction if her arms were restored, yet it is unlikely that her creator broke them off in cold blood. But who can draw the line between deliberate cheating and the tricks of the unconscious? Much of the *nouveau roman* and of *Last Year in Marienbad* reminds one of a way of playing poker where you hide your cards not only from your opponent but from yourself. This can sometimes be a winning strategy —but what does "winning" mean in this context?

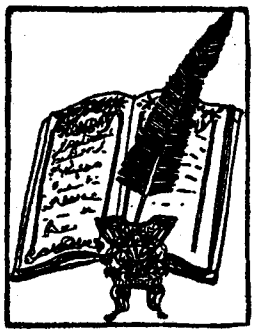
THERE ARE MANY OTHER fields where one can watch the law of infolding at work. Humour has travelled a long way from the *Punch* cartoon to the *New Yorker*'s sophisticated riddles. Metaphors have a way of shrivelling into dehydrated clichés; they are replaced by fresh supplies of a less obvious and explicit kind. Rhythm and metre have evolved from simple, repetitive pulses into intricate patterns, in which the erstwhile beat of the tom-tom is implied, but no longer pounded out. Rhyme, as the most explicit form of euphony, is folding in—or up.

In the contemporary visual arts the process is too obvious to need stressing. Only a forger could, in our day, paint in the style of Vermeer (however perfect his technique) because to paint like Vermeer, the artist would have to forget that he has ever seen a Manet or Cézanne. So he has to be either a forger or a Rip Van Winkle who has slept since the seventeenth century. But it would be a mistake to believe that the trend towards the implicit is only found in modern painting. Leonardo invented the technique of the *sfumato* or veiled form, such as the blurred contours at the corners of the Mona Lisa's eyes, which have never lost their fascination; and Titian in his old age invented the technique of what Vasari called "the crudely daubed strokes and blobs" which, looked at from close quarters, cannot be deciphered and which let the picture unfold only when you step back; Rembrandt went through a similar progression, from the neat and meticulous to the loose and suggestive brushstroke in his rendering of embroideries. The examples could be multiplied. It could be said, for instance, that in the peak periods of Chinese painting the picture consisted of what was left out. I cannot resist quoting just one phrase from a 17th-century Chinese manual (which I owe to Gombrich): "Figures, even though painted without eyes, must seem to look; without ears, must seem to listen.... That is truly giving expression to the invisible...."

TO MAKE A LAST cross-reference to science, even there the law of infolding operates. Aristotle firmly believed that all possible discoveries and inventions had already been made in his time; Bacon and Descartes thought that it would take just one more generation to solve all the mysteries of the universe; even 19th-century scientists held such optimistic beliefs. Only recently did we begin to realise that the unfolding of the secrets of nature was accompanied by a parallel process of infolding, because the more precise knowledge the physicist acquired, the more ambiguous and elusive the mathematical symbols he had to use; he could no longer make an intelligible model of reality, he could only allude to it by abstract equations.

To sum up—I have tried to point to a recurrent pattern in the history of science and art which, broadly speaking, both seem to move through cycles of revolution—consolidation—saturation—crisis and new departure. Revolutions are characterised by shifts in selective emphasis; the period of consolidation is one of cumulative progress; the third period is a constant struggle against the law of diminishing returns, and one of the effective antidotes is indicated by the law of infolding. I must ask your indulgence for so much law-making and speculation; but if the Creator had a purpose in equipping us with a neck, he surely meant us to stick it out.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Column

"THERE ARE assuredly many ways to God and perhaps masturbation is one of them," Mr. Dennis Potter wrote recently in *The Times Saturday Review*. Quite naturally many readers of *The Times* felt offended, though by now they must surely have reconciled themselves to the fact that standards of editing in their favourite paper have become so eccentric and bizarre, so completely at the mercy of every whim of fashion, that one really has no right to be surprised at anything that appears in its columns.

But Mr. Potter was not in fact expressing an opinion of his own, though a careless or hasty reader might be excused for thinking so. He was repeating or parodying views expressed by Dr. John (*Honest to God*) Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, in his book *Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society* and quite rightly mocking that enlightened prelate's efforts to render the Gospel palatable to the readers of *Playboy* magazine. Only, unfortunately, in denouncing the Bishop Mr. Potter falls into errors as grave as those in which the Bishop flounders, and his prose achieves precisely the same kind of false and empty rhetoric to which the Bishop is prone.

> Only in art and poetry which celebrates man in all his complex mystery or divinity or blocked freedom and with all his capacities for love and life-enhancing joy or bravery can we communicate any vital part of the religious impulse.

Such a sentence no more makes me believe that Mr. Potter has any understanding of religion than the Bishop's statement that "nothing could be more beautiful and entrancing" than a couple of photographs of Paula Kelly "dancing completely in the nude, pubic hair and all" makes me think that he understands anything about art.

Mr. Potter's error, of course, is to suppose that the religious impulse, whose existence it would be hard to deny even if we think it should be eradicated at birth, is confined to those who are capable of aesthetic experience. It is as vulgar an error as any of which the Bishop of Woolwich is capable; it might even deny the Bishop himself the means of salvation. A reading of William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* would quickly convince Mr. Potter of his mistake—how much more would a reading of the saints and mystics of all ages and all religions!

BUT INDEED THERE SEEMS TO BE something in the mere phrase *The Permissive Society* which seems to deprive normally sensitive and sensible people of their rational faculties. What the permissive society chiefly permits, it would sometimes appear, is an unlimited liberty to talk nonsense, and to promote the triumph of that great goddess of Dullness whose apotheosis Pope celebrated in *The Dunciad*:

> *Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,*
> *And universal darkness buries all.*

No one is more assiduous today in bringing about her reign than the writers of our "class" newspapers and week-end supplements, and among them Pope today would find the exact equivalent of the Grub Street hacks against whose lack of sense and taste, pretentiousness, and interminable repetitiveness he so brilliantly expostulated in the eighteenth century. For such, the Permissive Society offers an unrivalled field for their talents, and all the more so because by now they have been able to produce a rigidly schematic blueprint of its characteristic features, of which Youth, Crime, Drugs, Abortion, the Pill, Pornography and Nudity (but also Hair) are perhaps the most important. Whether and to what extent this society really exists we are very rarely told. On the one hand, we are almost invariably assured that anything which is said about it applies only to a tiny proportion of the population (which agreeably alleviates the newspaper reader's sense of guilt); on the other, that it is something which deeply affects and involves us all, so that none of us can afford to ignore it (which protects the newspaper reader from feeling out of things). An equal ambiguity applies to the forms in which the underlying Spirit of the Permissive Society is portrayed for us, for that there is such a Spirit, brooding over us all, everyone who deals in such matters is convinced. On the one hand we are assured that, by a curious sleight of hand, the Pill, Abortion, Drugs, etc., etc. (PAD is a useful abbreviation for the Society as a whole) are proofs of the essential innocence, youth, freshness and spontaneity of the whole thing, marks of the New Jerusalem into which we shall all soon enter. On the other hand, they are also portents of the Death, Doom, Decadence and Destruction which await us unless we put a stop to it all, even though this might have the disadvantage of putting the week-end supplements out of business.

AS EVERY READER of the Press knows by now, what a Problem requires is, not a solution, which after all would never do because it would dispose of it for ever, but a Probe; so much so that I am almost ready to parody Marshall McLuhan by declaring that the Problem *is* the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Probe. On a Sunday morning, I open the newspapers (to which, after a painful withdrawal period, accompanied by sweating-out and all the usual symptoms, I still remain an addict) and see that both the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* promise me two more wildly exciting, even compulsive Probes. I am hardly able to wait for the result. For one is that daring subject—can you guess?—*The Pill: Can It Be Banned?* The boldness of the project takes one's breath away, even though one can understand that after about a decade of discussing *The Pill: Should It Be Allowed?*, the *Observer* may well feel that the time has come to reformulate its question.

The *Sunday Times*, however evidently feels that the *Observer* has not got its timing or its scale right. Something larger altogether is by now required to stimulate jaded palates and it has not been slow to reply to the *Observer*'s bold initiative with something even more fascinating, nothing less indeed than a Probe to beat all Probes—guess what?—*The British Way of Love*, by Geoffrey Gorer, "the most scientifically based investigation of its kind ever achieved" and promising to do for Britain what the Kinsey report did for the United States. (As a Welshman, of course, I object to being lumped in with the English in such an investigation, "scientific" though it may be. Britain is a strictly political, not a sexual concept. It's all very well to talk about sexual mores in Bury St. Edmunds or Luton but what about Pontlottyn or Caersws?)

I should add that at the same time the *Sun* is conducting its own Probe, no less "scientific" no doubt, into the Permissive Society, in which the replies received to a questionnaire addressed by the *Sun* to its readers will be computerised at Manchester University, while the *Guardian* is conducting a Probe of quite unexampled silliness, entitled *How Far Can You Go?*, into "the expanding limits of what is permissible."

From the *Guardian*'s Probe I extract the following fairly typical example of the kind of intellectual confusion which seems to infect all such enquiries. It comes from an interview between the American actress Billie Dixon and Miss Catherine Stott, and the question at issue is the performance of the sexual act on the stage. "I think it could be done," says Miss Dixon, "if the two people were already partners. If not, I doubt if it would work, even physically." Of course, one understands Miss Dixon's fears that the whole thing might turn out to be a fiasco; but otherwise what possible difference could it make to the taste or sensibilities of a theatre audience that the public performance of the sexual act had already been played out in private, in a kind of undress rehearsal, which guaranteed that it was suitable for public exhibition and gave it the benefit, if not of clergy, at least of box-office. I sometimes think that it must certainly be the Comic Spirit which presides over the Permissive Society; who else more fitted to enjoy the absurdities of those who take it seriously?

PROBES INDEED HAVE ADDED a new dimension of horror and boredom to the English Sunday; they are the modern equivalent of the interminable sermons with which Victorian clergymen used to stupefy their congregations, though perhaps with more justification. Yet I cannot help thinking that just as the Victorian sermon had its day, so, sooner rather than later one hopes, will the Probe. In the same *Guardian* series from which I have already quoted, an interviewer suggests that perhaps the exploitation of sex for literary and journalistic purposes will soon begin to show diminishing returns. "After *Couples*, after *Portnoy*, after *The Hand Reared Boy* we have presumably exhausted (and how!) the possibilities of straightforward sex" —and he quotes Mr. Tony Godwin, the publisher, as adding: "Presumably we get into the deviations next." So I suppose we must wait for these, but after all they are fairly limited in number and even the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*, with their infinite capacity for repeating themselves, will find it hard to make them last for long; I really don't see much hope for more than five series of Probes into cunnilingus. But I suppose by that time they will be ready to start the whole dreary cycle all over again and the *Sunday Times* will be asking *Have We Gone Too Far?*—and the *Observer* will be having a Probe into *Men and Women: Is There Any Difference?*—and the *Guardian* will be promising us the most scientific and computerised investigation ever conducted into *The Manchester Way of Love*. For the truth is that the "class" newspapers' obsession with what might be called Sex-as-Fashion is only a mutation, designed to meet the needs of a better-educated class of readers, of that single-minded devotion to police court scandal which was once the speciality of the *News of the World* and has served the newspaper well for many decades. I see no reason why the new formula for increasing circulation should not serve equally well for equally long.

*

PERHAPS MY FEELINGS of irritation and boredom with the Problems and Probes of PAD have been unduly stimulated because I have, belatedly, been reading Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel, *The First Circle*; and be-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause the contrast between the kind of world out of which that originated and the world of PAD and the Probe is so vivid as to seem almost unbearable. Formally, of course, all the advantages are on the side of PAD, which after all is the world of freedom, of the spirit of liberal and unrestricted enquiry to which Probes so magnificently contribute, and of the exercise of every liberty which is compatible with law and even some which are not; while Solzhenitsyn's book comes out of a world of almost unrestricted tyranny and oppression, of unexampled human misery, and of a more perfect system of the exploitation of man by man than history has ever previously known. Indeed, if one had any doubt about the accuracy of this description of the U.S.S.R., one would only have to read *The First Circle* to recognise its truth. For it is, I think, a very great book, which itself verifies the truth which it tries to convey, in the same way that the greatest novels of the past, of Stendhal, or Dickens, of Balzac, or Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, are the evidence of their own truth, and perhaps for this reason in reading Solzhenitsyn it is to such models that one's mind instinctively recurs.

Why is it then that it is the book which comes out of the land of tyranny which conveys a message, not of despair, but hope, and not of hatred, but love, more vividly, I think, than anything I have read recently in the literature of the West? And how is it that one man, with one book, seems to be able to tell us more about his own society, from which he is an outcast, than any number of probes can tell us about our own society, which we are so much better equipped to understand, so much so indeed that it seems more vivid and real to us than our own? Even more, why is it that such a book and such a writer, the products of such terrible circumstances, should convey to us the sense of human freedom, of the infinite capacities and potentialities of human beings, more vividly than any Western writer has been able to do in recent years?

I do not know the answer to these questions, and indeed there is a kind of paradox in them which I myself do not wholly understand. It would be easy to say that it is the quality of genius to produce such effects, but I do not think it is a sufficient answer, nor would it explain why it is precisely Russia which has produced this particular kind of genius. Again, it would be easy to argue that it is precisely the immensity of Russia's experience of suffering, and Solzhenitsyn's own share in it, which has made him into the writer he is; and no doubt this would partly be true, but again it does not explain why it is the sense, not so much of suffering in itself, but of the power to comprehend and transcend it, which suffuses *The First Circle*, so that in some extraordinary way it is possible, in spite of its almost unrelieved picture of oppression, hypocrisy and brutality, to speak of it as an optimistic book, in a sense which it would be impossible to apply to any writer of comparable literary stature to Solzhenitsyn's in the West today.

INDEED, ONE COULD SAY with every confidence that it would be quite impossible for any Western novelist to write such a book today; not so much because of the particular experiences and environment which it embodies, but because of the intellectual and spiritual standards by which they are judged. For despite all his imagination, his capacity for sympathy and understanding, Solzhenitsyn retains the faculty of judgment and that is not a quality which we any longer look to literature for in the West today. Moreover, though he writes of experiences which to us are infinitely unfamiliar except by hearsay, we instinctively trust his judgment because it is based on standards which are universally acceptable and intelligible, and are such indeed as any ordinary man might understand. He writes indeed as a human being might write if he also possessed the highest degree of literary talent, and this also is something which for many years now we have been unaccustomed to meet in the West. One reason for this, I think, is the obsessive attention which Western writers have devoted to those aspects of human life which find their most complete expression in PAD. They form, for the West, that First Circle of Hell which is the subject of Solzhenitsyn's book; but it is an even narrower and more constricting circle and I think it could be shown that by definition the Western version excludes the kind of qualities which make Solzhenitsyn so remarkable a writer.

In a recent letter to Konstantin A. Fedub, Secretary of the Union of Writers of the U.S.S.R. (the smuggled text of which was published in the *Guardian*), Alexander Tvardovsky —the courageous Russian writer who was recently forced out of the editorship of *Novy Mir*—has written of Solzhenitsyn's "principle of truthfulness, which does not fear the complexities of life, but goes boldly forward to the end in disclosing them," and contrasts it with the kind of fiction which "impoverishes reality" in accordance with the requirements of the latest ideological scheme. PAD, I think, "impoverishes reality" quite as much as any dogma of Marxism; but alas! we have, as yet, no Solzhenitsyn to expose its pretentions.

R

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of Passions and Polemics

Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, & Old Controversies — By RAYMOND ARON

I BEGAN my intellectual career with a reflection on Marxism. An "advanced thinker," like most of the French intellectuals who came out of the Jewish bourgeoisie, I wanted to make a philosophical critique of my political convictions, which I felt to be naïve, dictated by the milieu, with no other foundation than spontaneous preferences or antipathies. I was at the time (1930) studying in Germany. This critique consisted, and still consists, of two elements: a comparison of the historical perspectives opened by the Marxism of Marx with the actual development of modern society; and an exploration of the relation between history and the historian, between society and the one who interprets it, between the historicity of collective institutions and that of the individual.

The situation during the 1930s differed profoundly from that of the '60s. Thirty years ago the capitalists were not far from believing in the truth of the Marxist prophecies. I have spoken somewhere, in connection with these prophecies, of a *catastrophic optimism*. Non-Marxists did not retain the optimism, the radiant image of the post-capitalist régime or of the planned economy, but inclined toward catastrophism. For my part, I did not rule out catastrophes—on the contrary, the rise of National Socialism made it impossible to be unaware of their imminence—but even then it seemed to me impossible to account for the events of the century within the framework of classical Marxism (that Marxism which the Second International, following Engels, had codified and vulgarised).

The arguments that had led me to the conclusion that Marxism was not true (although I wished with all my heart that it was) are, I admit, hopelessly commonplace. Even then I was already determined not to be afraid of facts, even those that are cited by reactionaries. The conformism of *la gauche* was just as disagreeable to me as the conformism of *la droite*. Even in those remote days I wondered why planning should automatically be the prerogative of the Left and the mechanism of the market that of the Right.

The evidence that prevented me, in spite of myself, from becoming a Marxist, nobody today any longer denies. The so-called capitalist régime, that is, the régime defined by private ownership of the instruments of production and the mechanisms of the market, does *not* bring about the pauperisation of the masses, it does *not* spontaneously create the division of the social body into a minority of exploiters and a mass of the exploited, it does *not* dig its own grave. When a country with a capitalist régime undergoes a crisis, the uprooted masses—non-proletarian masses and partly even proletarian masses—are just as apt to join a nationalist movement as a movement of internationalist inspiration. In 1914 the German workers had proved to be just as patriotic as the French workers. From 1930 to 1933 in the Weimar Republic nationalism had once again stifled the so-called proletarian or revolutionary conscience.

THIS EVIDENCE SUGGESTED a historical vision essentially different from that of classical Marxism. Neither the primacy of one type of cause nor the conception of capitalism as a historic totality was, in my eyes, consistent with reality, as soon as this reality was examined without prejudice. Neither the war of 1914 nor the outbreaks of fascism were the effects or expressions of "capitalism," transfigured, for purposes of demonstration, into a mysterious and omnipresent monster. The division of humanity into sovereign states, into separate and self-conscious nations, had preceded capitalism and would survive it. Furthermore, socialism, to the extent that it meant state ownership and control of the instruments of production, would inevitably reinforce nationalism in the twofold sense of the state's desire for independence or power and of popular involvement in the political community.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thirty years ago I was already inclined to suspect that all socialism was national (although all national socialism need not be National Socialist, if Hitler's régime is taken as a model).

HAVING RENOUNCED, regretfully but once and for all, a "monistic" or all-inclusive view of contemporary evolution, I was resigned to making decisions that were free and attended by risk, not blindly, but without any precise or certain knowledge of the future—that knowledge of the end of history which would give one's commitment the sanction of an ultimate truth. Furthermore, the "pluralistic" nature of the historical reality as well as the plurality of values makes our choices both ambiguous and dramatic. No régime simultaneously accomplishes everything to which we aspire. Beginning with Marxism, I arrived at the tragic existentialism of Max Weber. In the '30s as I witnessed, almost in despair, the decadence of the French nation and the corruption of the democracies, I wondered whether one day it would be necessary to choose between the salvation of my country and the preservation of freedom.

This philosophy, to which, in my *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire* (1938), I gave an exaggeratedly pathetic expression (the less one has known of suffering, the more one is sometimes given to the tragic style), was in no way *irrationalist*. On the contrary, it was, and still is, as I interpret it, essentially rationalist, but (to use Sartre's terminology) its rationality is *analytic* or *scientific*. It has nothing to do with historical Reason, if the latter is conceived as a reconciliation between subject and object, between men and their works, as the assurance that global history ultimately obeys a rationality of which individual actors are the unconscious agents.

This conception was the culmination of what I referred to above as the second object of my reflection on Marxism: the relation of historical man to history, which is both internal and external to him—internal because the objective mind is present in him, external because he feels miserable and helpless in the face of the forces that are unleashed during periods of upheaval. This way of thinking might have been called dialectical if this term, in the current usage of the Marxists, had not implied both *totality* (or totalisation) and knowledge of the *end* (the end of prehistory, if not of history itself).

Before the war of 1939—or rather before 1917—this discussion was essentially German. Of all Marxist schools before 1914, the German school was the most prestigious. The Russian school did not deny its debt to its Germanic masters. Even in 1903, when he wrote *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin invoked Karl Kautsky to justify the role of the intellectuals, who were alone capable of saving the workers from the temptation and facility of trade unionism, from syndical vindication *hic et nunc*, without awareness of or desire for a historic mission. The philosophy of Marx, precisely because of its intrinsic ambiguity—is the movement of history governed by laws comparable to the laws of nature, or is it the result of a free, and hence to a certain extent unpredictable, response of men to a situation?—has always lent itself to many interpretations, some of which are more convincing than others if you follow the rules of historical criticism, but all of which, strictly speaking, are tolerable: a "*Kantian Marxism*," if you assume socialism to be a moral objective determined by the conscience in the face of the capitalist reality; a "*Hegelian Marxism*," whose origins are in the *Phenomenology of Mind* more than they are in the *Philosophy of Right*; and a *positivist* (or "*scientific*") *Marxism*, which is more or less Hegelianised by the inclusion of a dialectic of nature. All these versions of Marxism have in common the fact that they are *humanistic*, provided we understand this vague term to imply an affirmation that "man is for man the supreme being" and that the motive and ambition of socialism is the fulfilment of man, however indefinite may be the nature or essence of man.

THE REVOLUTION of 1917 created an additional uncertainty. It is possible to interpret Marxism-Leninism in voluntarist terms; in fact, this is even the most normal interpretation of the Bolshevik enterprise which, in contempt of the orthodox doctrine, seized power in a country where the working class was a minority and where capitalism had not yet reached maturity. But, for politically understandable motives, the Bolsheviks maintained both an *objectivist theory* of the evolution of history and a *practice* which was alien to this theory and, so to speak, *systematically opportunistic*.

Now, the philosophers, historians, or sociologists who supported the Soviet cause or sympathised with it wavered, according to circumstances and their temperaments, between two attitudes. Either they faithfully repeated the platitudes constantly being imposed by the orthodoxy of the state, no matter how false or even absurd this orthodoxy was, or they looked to the Marxism of Marx, and especially of the young Marx, for a subtler version of their faith. Georg Lukács' book *History and Class Con-*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sciousness (1923) is responsible for this return to sources. It contains most of the themes of the ideological or sociological disputes which stirred socialist circles in Weimar Germany. Repudiated by the author himself a few years later, its Marxism is both Hegelian and existential: Hegelian because it tries to grasp the dialectical unity of subject and object, of history as a whole and the class which becomes conscious of this history before surpassing it; existential because the condition imposed on man by the capitalist régime, the depersonalisation of social relations, the alienation of man in things, characterises reality and at the same time inherently contains a criticism of this reality.

This kind of Marxism has never been accepted by the Bolsheviks, and it is still not accepted today, although in Eastern Europe there is some evidence of a greater tolerance toward and an increased interest in the young Marx and in Hegelian-existential Marxism.

This subtle Marxism—let us so designate the Marxism which rejects the objectivistic and naturalistic philosophy of Engels and the simplifications of "Diamat," and puts the emphasis on the dialectic between the subjective and the objective, between the situation and the men, and which denounces capitalism because of the condition which it imposes on men—does not *logically* imply any political stance. It may justify the adoption of Marxism-Leninism, in which case it constitutes a personal, semi-clandestine interpretation of the officially accepted dogma. It may also be combined with a sympathy for the Soviet cause without membership in the Communist party; it may also lead to hostility toward Marxism-Leninism without rejection of the Marxist inspiration. After 1945 the French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty took up the search for a subtle Marxism which the Third Reich had interrupted in Germany. For my own part, I was plagued by two questions, one political, the other moral. Once the historical vision of Marxism has been refuted by history itself, what place is the individual to assume in the evolution of modern society? What is the approach which leads to a commitment that is not "true," but reasonable?

I AM AFRAID the reader will occasionally become irritated by the contrast between the subtlety of the controversies and the relative simplicity of the questions, by the translation of political positions into a somewhat abstruse philosophical language. At times I myself question the significance of these disputes. However, the French existentialists have occupied too important a place in the literary life of France over the past twenty-five years to give us the right to dismiss even the most vulnerable part of their work. Besides, and most importantly, their way of thinking is not an expression of French provincialism. Other writers or thinkers throughout the world have been seduced by the same arguments, have fallen victim to the same sophisms.

What was the issue, between 1945 and 1956 (the date of Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist party), that divided French intellectuals—Communists, more or less sympathetic non-Communists, and anti-Communists? The Communists blindly followed the party line, which in turn conformed to instructions from Moscow. According to the occasion, advanced socialists or "fellow travellers"—for example, Sartre and his friends—were denounced to the indignant masses as "objective" allies of capitalism and imperialism or, on the contrary, welcomed, not without reservations, as fighters for peace and democracy.

Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, without ever deviating from their anti-anti-Communism, and without ever joining the Communist party, hesitated between several attitudes. In 1947 Sartre tried to form an organisation which would have fallen somewhere between Communism, which was unacceptable to free minds, and a bourgeois type of socialism, which was too prosaic to satisfy a revolutionary desire. The failure of this project brought him closer to the Communist party, with whom he collaborated in affiliated organisations like the peace movement. Merleau-Ponty always remained outside of parties and kept away from all properly political activity, but in *Humanisme et Terreur* (1947), he attributed the Communist enterprise with a historic privilege which he denied it a few years later in *Les Aventures de la dialectique* (1955), after the Korean war and a reappraisal of his own philosophy.

The sociologist will be inclined to give a simple explanation of these hesitations, these half-joinings and half-leavings. Prevented by their ideas and the decline of their country from resigning themselves to a "bourgeois democracy," and repelled by the ideological despotism of Communism, these thinkers had no country other than the country of their dream, a Communism which was different from that of the Soviet Union at the time of Stalin or even of Khrushchev. These homeless intellectuals, who belonged to neither of the two camps in the Cold War, argued endlessly about the exact nuance that suited their abstention.

Personally, I objected less to the political attitude of either—I sometimes found it unreasonable, but never unworthy (whereas, in

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sartre's eyes, my own attitude was not unreasonable but was unworthy)—than to the philosophical justification of decisions which I considered personal and arbitrary. Merleau-Ponty, at the time he was writing *Humanisme et Terreur*, and Sartre, after 1945, wanted, if not to derive their political commitment from their philosophy, at least to show that this commitment could not be separated from their philosophy. In various studies I have tried to show that, on the contrary, there is no necessary connection between the two.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL arguments on which French existentialists tried to base "the historical privilege of the Communist enterprise"? The first, which is found in *Humanisme et Terreur* as well as in the writings of Sartre, refers to the intention (*projet*) of the historical movement that calls itself Marxist-Leninist. In spite of everything, this movement is motivated by a plan of total liberation, whereas in a sense the other parties are resigned to injustices of a kind that reforms may improve but not radically transform. This argument contradicts a celebrated thesis of Marx in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. If we must judge societies according to what they are and not according to what they pretend to be, why should the Communist enterprise be defined by its alleged goal rather than by the régimes to which, temporarily at least, it has given birth?

The second argument, related to the first, is that the failure of the Communist enterprise signifies the failure of historical Reason itself. This argument is also easy to refute. Why, assuming that human history must either end happily or remain a senseless turmoil, should the crucial experience occur in the middle of the 20th century, in a country in no way marked for this sublime role? The true believer, won over by the idealism of the revolutionary parties, feels robbed of hope on the day when these parties have been defeated by their victory, that is, when they have revealed themselves as similar to those they have replaced.

Beyond these two arguments the paths of Merleau-Ponty and Sartre diverge. The first sought the foundation of his Marxism in an actual experience, that of the proletariat; the second sought it in a decision, that of the party which transforms the class which, as such, is a "passive seriality," into a group, that is, into an action. With the perspective of the past ten years, and after reading *La Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960),[1] I would make a somewhat different interpretation of the controversy that went on between the two friends in 1955–56. The difference of opinion was philosophically more profound than I suggested, and Merleau-Ponty was more right than I believed.

SARTRE, in spite of everthing, never transcended the Cartesian duality as reinterpreted by Husserl. The Sartrian consciousness is solitary, self-translucid, and alienated in matter; and as a result of scarcity, each man becomes the enemy of every other. It is only by revolt, in violent action, that men together escape solitude and inhumanity, pending their mutual recognition. The rejection of intermediary situations underlies both the Sartrian dualism and the critique made of it by Merleau-Ponty.

Perhaps the most characteristic trait of the Marxism of the French existentialists (and of Lukács too, for that matter) is their indifference to the economic and perhaps even to the sociological problems of Marxism. It is as if Sartre, as well as Merleau-Ponty, had been less concerned with the content of the socio-economic theories of Marx or the Marxists than with the reconciliation of a philosophy of personal destiny with a philosophy of collective salvation by history.

Merleau-Ponty, who died before he completed his work, seemed to have drifted away from these historico-political controversies and returned to the ultimate questions of philosophy, but he had agreed that the objective examination of opposing régimes preceded commitment and formed a foundation for it. Sartre, on the other hand, remained faithful to himself, and one looks in vain, in *Critique de la raison dialectique*, for a motive of any kind—economic, social, or political—for preferring a Soviet régime to a régime of the Western type. He announces with a dogmatism that is unconsciously naïve that the analysis in *Das Kapital* is so completely and obviously true that any commentary is useless and could only serve to weaken its doctrine. But, having thus declared his allegiance to a theory whose inadequacies the most orthodox Marxist-Leninists admit even as they justly proclaim its greatness, Sartre devotes hundreds and hundreds of pages to a dialectic of the *series* and the *group*, of consciousness and wholes, of the *practico-inert* and *freedom*, which has nothing to do with Marxism, either that of Marx or that of the Marxist-Leninists, and which is itself ultimately difficult to reconcile with a properly historical dialectic. As long as scarcity lasts, human societies seem doomed to a static and seemingly eternal dialectic: alienation in the practico-inert; liberation, by action, of the group; the fatality of the organisation of

[1] See my essay, "Sartre's Marxism," ENCOUNTER, June 1965.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the group, then of institutions; and thus a relapse into the practico-inert. If humanity begins with revolt, it must endlessly repeat an enterprise which cannot succeed and which cannot be abandoned. (It is understandable that the Marxist-Leninists have not recognised their faith in this new myth of Sisyphus.)

THE PURELY POLITICAL aspect of these debates belongs to the past. In one sense they are only of historical interest; they evoke the "crisis of conscience" experienced by great intellectuals in a country where the Communist party was too powerful for the Left to be able to exclude it without thereby sacrificing its chances of arriving at power, and where the conservative parties and the government itself appeared for a certain period incapable of promoting social progress. In other countries this crisis of conscience does not yet belong to the past. Anglo-American readers, who will be inclined to regard these academic controversies as pointless and narrowly French, should not forget that they are being echoed throughout the Third World, at least in Latin America, and that these professors have disciples and rivals in many capitals, from Warsaw to Havana and Rio de Janeiro. Marxism and Existentialism, sometimes separately and sometimes together, although often regarded as anachronistic by English or American philosophers committed to logical positivism or to the analysis of language, continue to represent one of the major philosophical tendencies of our age. This is why I continue to take seriously questions that were and still are raised by Marxists and existentialists.[2] Although I have disagreed radically with Sartre, I belong by education and interests, to the same universe he does. It is by placing myself on the ground common to Marxism and Existentialism that I am able to engage in discussion with friends of my youth, adversaries of yesterday, and colleagues of today. It is by using the same concepts and referring to the same values that I try to convince them of their errors.

[2] Perhaps many of those who agree with my conclusions, especially in the United States, will criticise me for taking too seriously debates which do not merit so much attention or respect. I believe they would be wrong to react in this way, even if they are professionals in the field of philosophy. Frankly, linguistic analysis as it is practised in many universities sometimes strikes me as just as pointless as the argument between Camus and Sartre about the relation between revolt and revolution, or the argument between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty about the relation between class and party, or between actual experience and action.

WHAT IS THIS "common ground" of Marxism and Existentialism? I would define it as *the calling into question of both the destiny of the individual and the historical destiny of mankind*. In the beginning, before 1940, Sartre pondered the destiny of the individual, and it seems to me that he has remained more a moralist than a sociologist. I do not think that *La Critique de la raison dialectique* reaches the same level as *L'Etre et le Néant* (1943), and I doubt whether Sartre succeeded in this last book in integrating the Marxist notion of the collective salvation of humanity by the proletarian revolution into a philosophy of solitary consciousness. But what concerns me here is not the success or failure of this "Marxianised existentialism" or this "existentialised Marxism," but the very fact of the conjunction, the link recognised between human condition and historical evolution. I recognise this link myself, and in this sense I would be tempted to acknowledge my debt to the Marxist *method*, in so far as this method combines an existential dimension (what is the lot that falls to man in a given régime?), a sociological dimension (what are the distinctive characteristics of a socio-economic régime?), and a historical dimension (what are the broad lines of development of modern society?). My anti-Marxism has to do primarily with the rejection of the scheme of historical development elaborated by the Marxists on the basis of the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, a scheme which can be supported only with the addition of so many complementary hypotheses that it is better, in accordance with the customary rules of science, simply to abandon it. It also has to do with the rejection of a philosophy or political position which can only be justified by an unknown future.

Within certain limits, justification by the future is inevitable and legitimate. Every political decision is a gamble that will be won or lost as a result of events which are beyond our control. The risk that the régime that comes out of a revolution may be worse than the existing régime is not sufficient reason to condemn revolutionaries. Action, like life itself, is always attended by risk. Under certain circumstances a man of feeling will prefer the risks of revolution, even a Communist revolution, to the intolerable vices of the established order. If I lived in the United States, I would probably devote more time to denouncing the anti-Communist obsession than I would to dispelling the illusions of "liberals" attracted by Marxism.

If justification by the future is inseparable from the historical condition of man, it always involves a danger which is moral as well as human. Although there is no politics without

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

violence, the man of action is less reluctant to resort to violence when he sets himself a sublime goal. Mentally putting himself in the place of our grandchildren, he serenely declares that the sacrifices of today will have been long forgotten when men are reaping the benefits of established socialism. I plead for the living, not against those who will come after them, but against the casualness with which intellectuals of goodwill agree to let the living suffer for the possible profit of those who are not yet born. Let us not encourage an inevitable tendency of our civilisation. Modern societies are and must be *futurist*: they claim to know in advance what they will be like, and technicians are inclined to be even more irritated by the resistance of men than by that of things.

What are the arguments in a defence of the living or an indictment of the abuses of justification by the future? I see three, proceeding from the least important to the most important, or from science to philosophy.

IT IS QUITE TRUE that the future is not determined and that men, by their consciousness, by their will, help to shape it. But they have more chance of shaping a future that corresponds to their aspirations if they distinguish precisely what depends on them and what does not depend on them. But the Marxists—and the Marxian existentialists, following their example—assume as determined in advance what is incapable of being known and perhaps even of being realised. They subordinate freedom to a pseudo-fatality and enslave it to myths. The Marxist-Leninist, in so far as he adheres to the classical scheme of Marxism, assumes socialism to be the predetermined culmination of historical evolution. He transfigures socialism into the end of prehistory, he sees it as a radical break in the course of human events, an order incomparable to that of all known societies. Therefore all means, however horrible, are sanctified by the chosen and inevitable goal. Existentialists who do not succeed in breaking away from Marxist millenarianism argue along similar lines but with more reservations: the goal is sublime, it makes it impossible to condemn the enterprise, but it is not enough to justify it completely. The *intellectual* error consists in foreseeing the régime (which, at a distance of a few dozen years, is difficult to do) instead of foreseeing merely the distinctive and universal traits of modernity which will be found in varying degrees in all industrially developed societies without this meaning that these societies must all choose the same régime; for an economic or political régime is merely one solution among others to the problem or problems which every economy or political régime must solve. In transferring the necessity and foreseeability of *régimes* to the *development* itself one does not devaluate conflicts between régimes, one does not substitute irenic dreams for warlike realities, one is armed against the snares and seductions of fanaticism.

Perhaps, in order to act and fight, many men need to assign an absolute value to a historical cause which is almost always uncertain and never entirely pure. Personally, at least in our time, I prefer, and it is my second argument, to teach an active pessimism, though I am not unaware that a teaching of this kind disappoints many of the very persons who share my preferences. If the development is necessary and foreseeable rather than the régime, then an objective, systematic comparison of various economic, political, and social régimes becomes necessary. But this comparison will also serve as an antidote to the abuses of the justification by the future. If we observe class conflicts in various societies, if we study scarcity and the conditions that would allow us to overcome it, we shall have difficulty making reasonable sense out of notions like "the end of prehistory" or "homogeneous society." All régimes will be reduced to the same level, all parties will belong to the same species. We demand of collectives virtues which we do not assign to men as individuals. How can we be astonished that no régime *simultaneously* satisfies all the values to which we are devoted, that each party has a clean conscience and is unaware of its sacrifices?

THE THIRD ARGUMENT, which is alone decisive in spite of its ambiguity, I feel strongly without being capable of expressing it precisely. What horrifies me about secular religions is the breakdown of the distinction between the profane and the sacred, between one class and the messiah, between one régime and the kingdom of God. Christians should feel this horror more strongly than I do, but in fact some of them, certain worker-priests for example, have, on the contrary, been attracted by the structural similarity of the opposing beliefs. I do not believe that man has any other destiny than on this earth and in this history. I am quite aware that religions, even those that address themselves to the individual soul and theoretically devaluate social hierarchies, have all at one time or another sanctioned and almost sanctified temporal hierarchies. Nevertheless I continue to regard religion as essentially the negation or at least the questioning of social values, which are always distributed among men according to criteria to which neither reason nor the heart can fully subscribe. But the Marxists and the existentialists (at least Sartre and his followers),

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in their radical atheism, ultimately reduce existence to action; indeed, ultimately they place historical action above everything. Thus, in the last analysis, devotion to party becomes the highest merit and revolt the "beginning of humanity." The human type of the militant is not without nobility. However, the revolutionary of today or of yesterday obeys a party which extends to a mission in the name of historical myths; he fights his fellow men with a view to eternal peace; but in the meantime he wages permanent war. With no other criterion than the truth of the party, with no other certitude than the rejection of the present, the militant, whether Marxist or existentialist, is in fact a nihilist.

MARXIST NIHILISM is based on the conception of historical necessity. Sartrian nihilism is based on the conception of an empty freedom which, finding itself alienated in the real, can recover itself only in revolt. The alliance between a philosophy of historical determinism and a philosophy of individual freedom devoid of all determinacy and independent of any imperative may be fundamentally less paradoxical than it appears at first glance. The values of the first are derived from an alleged determinism; the values of the second arise from a pure freedom. Marxists and followers of Sartre do not reject the values of the humanist and rationalist tradition. If both groups are just as able to accept terror in the name of freedom, it is because by reducing man to action or by subordinating the individual to history, they have deprived themselves of the means of rejecting the unacceptable. Even Sartre, who denies all objective historical determinism, ends by admitting that socialism had *necessarily* to take the form of the "cult of personality." The philosopher of freedom is unable to condemn, even retrospectively, the crimes of Stalinism.

These criticisms may seem negative; they are above all a negation of the nihilism which is implicit in a certain kind of Marxism or a certain kind of existentialism. In this sense they have, in my opinion, a positive content. Their aim is to make man aware of the irreducible plurality of the dimensions that characterise his existence. They want to remind him of certain commonplace truths: political action is not the only form of action, revolution is not the only form of political action; submission to an alleged historical necessity may become the worst form of alienation. The fact that crimes may be forgotten by our grandchildren does not make them forgivable at the time they are committed. To substitute the future perfect for the simple future is too convenient. Ethics judges politics as much as politics judges ethics. Nobody can say in what circumstances one must prevail over the other, and everybody must decide this question for himself alone, at the risk of being mistaken. The worst error would be to fail to recognise this dialectic which determines our condition and to surrender totally to nihilism or fanaticism, either by denying all spiritual imperatives or by trusting blindly in an alleged determinism of history.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POETRY

The Abomination of Moab

On Translating Verse — By ROBERT CONQUEST

IT IS A CENTURY since Matthew Arnold introduced into English, in the sense in which we now use it, the word "Philistine," and defined him for us as "a strong, dogged opponent of the chosen people, of the children of light. . . ." But we need to remember that Israel's early troubles were not always from this straightforward foe. On the other flank lay a more insidious enemy of their own blood, the Moabites, who, from their capital at Shittim, infiltrated temple and harem and set the children of light whoring after strange doctrine. At the present time, not Alderman Dagon but Professor Chemosh is the bigger menace. Philistia is, at least for the moment, a beaten force. Today's tocsin, for everyone who cares for the arts, is rather, "The Moabites be upon thee!"

These reflections apply, of course, to current literary attitudes in general. But verse translation is perhaps the field in which the highest abomination rate is achieved. The problems have been frequently discussed, and need no full restating here. The main issue has long been clear—that, as Pope puts it,

> There have not been more men misled in former times by a servile dull adherence to the letter, than have been deluded in ours by a chimerical insolent hope of raising and improving their author.

As to which of the two dangers is the more obtrusive at present, there should (one would have thought) be little dispute. Departure from the original far more extreme than anything any earlier age could have imagined has long been a respectable weapon in the Moabite anti-art armoury.

One or two formidable figures have indeed spoken up for greater rigour—for example, Mr. Anthony Burgess and Mr. Vladimir Nabokov. It is true that Nabokov's own literal verse translation of *Evgeni Onegin*[1] can unfortunately not be regarded as a success, for two main reasons. First, he has retained of the strict verse-structure of the original only the iambic pentameter, with lines varying from two to six feet, while the single "poetic" device he uses, and much too indiscriminately, is the very tricky one of inversion. Second, his idea of being literal involves the very frequent use of rare or non-existent English words for quite common Russian ones: for example, since we have no adjective from "field" to match the Russian "*polevoy*," he has rendered it as "campestral." This is to interpret the word "literal" in far too restrictive a sense, confining it to the denotative and ignoring the connotative, with highly distorting results.

But these particular faults do not, of course, affect the case as such. And they are, anyhow, as nothing compared with the excesses of the opposite faction. The latest to hand is a new translation of Catullus,[2] for which astonishing claims have been made. A typical passage (which first appeared in the sinisterly named *Journal of Creative Thought* in Buffalo—others have come out in *Poetry* Chicago) runs,

> *Lesbia (my price scent t'her hero) mauls and deplores me, 'dig it':*
> *he the lug fatuous Maximal Light titillates*

a rendering of:

> *Lesbia mi praesente viro malo plurima dicit*
> *haec ille fatuo maxima laetistiast*

The Hun is at play—worse still, *at work*—among the ruins.

One would think that this sort of thing would be too much for anyone to swallow, even today. But though many critics, especially in Britain, remained unimpressed, not all did. One reviewer (in the *Sunday Times*) even suggested that though we dull fellows may deplore this sort of thing, Catullus himself would have liked it. This facile and traditional ploy is par-

[1] *Eugene Onegin*. Tr. by Vladimir Nabokov. 4 vols. Pantheon Books. $18.50.

[2] *Catullus*. Translated by Louis and Celia Zukofsky. Jonathan Cape, 63s.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ticularly inept here, since Catullus' own effort in the field, his translation of Sappho's "Ode to Anactoria" is, of course—even though "enfeebled" (as Swinburne put it) by occasional padding—wholly in the literalist tradition. "Φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν" becomes, or rather stays, "*Ille mi par esse deo videtur*" —but when it's Zukofsky's turn we get "He'll hie me, par *is* he? The God divide her." (To round it all off, one might suggest a Sappho-Zukofsky: "Fine heat! I'm makin' noses as the God's in.")

MORE FORMAL JUSTIFICATIONS have been advanced, and it is worth looking at a couple of the most solemn. It is true that the second is made by the translator himself, but the first is by Professor Hugh Kenner, the noted Poundian. Kenner remarks, in good demotic Moabite,

> The structural eloquence is phatic, the Latin treated not only as a source of "meanings" but as a graph of breathings and intonations; the achieved English is irremediably strange; and the strangeness is accepted and turned into a virtue by the sheer scale of the enterprise, which (difficulty overcome) offers not just a few compliant instances but Catullus whole, subdued after unimaginable trouble. A mad enterprise? yet it carries Pound's way with *The Seafarer*, or Joyce's with what you like, to its logical term.

Zukofsky himself says in his preface, "This translation of Catullus follows the sound, rhythm and syntax of his Latin—tries, as is said, to breathe the 'literal' meaning with him." Mr. Zukofsky, after all, may be joking. And it might even be argued that to try to do what he claims to be doing is not in itself a harmful way of spending a lazy afternoon. But to be given it seriously, to hear it spoken of as Professor Kenner does, is to feel a chill wind from the abysses of unreason.

What on earth can Kenner and Zukofsky mean? Apart from their other defects is it seriously thought that these lines give anything whatever of the tone of Catullus' Latin? The "breathing" is nonsense anyway, on the obvious grounds that the Latin scansion by quantity is quite different from the English by stress. Even the syllable count is often wrong, through lack of attention to the Latin rules of elision. But, more basically, an easily moving sentence cannot possibly be said to have the same breathing as a clot of semi-comprehensible and over-consonantalised monosyllables. Do we really need to be told *again* that "When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw" runs differently from "Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain"? Is the whole matter of the poet's "ear" to be forgotten—and not only in this context? The answer seems to be yes, on both counts. Meanwhile we note that even Zukofsky's sole alleged virtue, for which everything else has been sacrificed, is also illusory.

Now, on its merits, Zukofsky's stuff is obviously not worth bothering about. We might pass on, merely hoping—and it is no more than a hope—that no one will find a way of being sillier still. But it is after all significant, in the mere fact that some allegedly expert voices have been raised in its favour. That this is the case about something so ostentatiously, so uncompromisingly awful, already tells us a good deal about the general standards now prevailing.

WE MAY DISCOVER a fair, a canonical demonstration of the Moabite position in Dr. George Steiner's *Penguin Book of Modern Verse Translation*, lately reprinted.[3] In his introduction Steiner argues, or rather asserts, the attractive Whorfean view of the status of language: "Each language cuts out its segment of reality. We live our life as we speak it . . ." etc. With all its important element of truth, this thesis has on the whole had to be modified fairly considerably, and is nowadays seldom put forward quite so flatly even in "general semantics" circles. Steiner uses it as a basis for the argument that languages are so idiosyncratic that translation—even of prose—is strictly speaking impossible, in the sense that the connotations of apparently identical words are different in different languages. So far, all is true and familiar: Anatole France remarks somewhere that Mlle de Lespinasse alone alters the word "*pleurer*" to something very unlike its supposed equivalents. But the well-known difficulties of translation and the impossibility of precise translation lead Dr. Steiner to conclude not that divergencies of sense and style should be kept to a minimum, but that any departure may be excused. Because the work is heartbreakingly hard and often fails, it should be abandoned in favour of something else. But all art involves difficulties: "*Lutte avec le carrare.*"

Dubious theses, unlike obviously reasonable ones, can only be made palatable by an impressive dialectic. When Steiner speaks of a translation being "explicitly directed towards Homer's survivance" the effect is of a technical jargon, and the implication is thus of accuracy, rigour, science. For there are nowadays two main attitudes to literature: on the one hand system, finality, revelation; on the other, recog-

[3] Penguin, 7s. 6d. I am here criticising Dr Steiner only on the view he puts in this particular book. In later contexts he has, on occasion, shown an admirable capacity to adjust and broaden his position.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nition that there can be no rigorous aesthetic at least until that improbable date in the future at which psychology itself attains rigour, and perhaps not even then. The former view is by far the more attractive. For pseudo-sciences are always appealing. Criticism nowadays all too often tends to resemble phrenology—a sophisticated methodology with an erudite jargon, dealing with material on the face of it closely connected with the subject, but in reality almost totally irrelevant to the main questions. This would not matter, perhaps, were it not usually in the service of the vicious or absurd. As Housman remarked in another context:

> The old unscientific days are everlasting; they are here and now; they are renewed perennially by the ear which takes formulas in, and the tongue which gives them out again....

Nowadays we have, Dr. Steiner feels, "a hunger for lineage." English literature does, in fact, already have a genuine lineage. But, like some boutique boy ashamed of his descent from a great statesman, it seems that this won't do. Instead of our real origins we are to create a fake genealogy. Dr. Steiner says—in approval—that Pound writes English "as though Shakespeare had not written before him."

John Betjeman has spoken in a similar context of "the nitwitted, arrogant art students, who dared to think they could create mouldings and motifs, which it has taken centuries to evolve." Our culture is to cease to have roots. Once an oak, it is to become a mangrove, with adventitious shoots dipping shallowly into a range of iridescent muds.

Who, Dr. Steiner asks, can read Homer, the Bible, Shakespeare, Pascal, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the poems of Li Po, and *The Tale of Genji* in the original? "Yet which would one be prepared to do without...?"; and of course this syllabus could be vastly extended. But even the effort truly to master it could almost certainly be made only at the expense of defects in the knowledge of history or philosophy or science which are at least equally components of the civilised man. More to the point still, nowadays there are all too many attempts on the whole of world culture by people who have not properly established their base camp in their own language and literature. What is the good of the student knowing—what is meant indeed by saying that he can know—Lao Tse and Apollinaire if he is ignorant of Herrick and Praed—let alone Hobbes and Gibbon? But of course, there is no true mastery of *Weltliteratur* on the scale here envisaged. One gets instead a varying degree of real contact with the original—more with French, less with Chinese. We may eventually stand in the same relationship to Chinese culture as we do now to French. But it will be a long, long process, and will not be achieved by fiat.

> *Wer den Dichter will verstehen*
> *Muss in Dichters Lande gehen.*

There are few *Länder* with which we are likely to be able to gain the necessary familiarity. But since it is now thought preferable not to "understand" or represent the poet, but to construct a Jenny Haniver from bits of his pickled corpse, we can stay home, or visit the literary non-world of cosmopolis.

If the "meaning," the background, and the poetic all come across in a defective and misleading way, we cannot speak of the experience of a foreign poetry as a poetic one. The influence of the original on the final assimilation is rather a stimulus, comparable to that given by an interesting scientific theory, or a piece of striking, though ill-told, folklore, or a random pattern of stars. The sort of translation that fails to do the utmost to overcome these barriers is merely a conveyor of chance misunderstanding.

Moreover, when it comes to poetry other elements are not just important, but decisive. Rhythm alone would make access to French verse far harder in principle than to Italian, Spanish or Russian. And how, for example, can Baudelaire's sensuousness through general words be conveyed in an English more than ever crazy for the particular?

Dr. Steiner rubs in the difficulty of the task, and hence the reasonableness of not even attempting it, with such remarks as "Anyone reading... almost any poem or fiction composed before 1915... is, in the fullest sense, translating." Well, of course, this is, to put it mildly, not so. The grain of truth in it is that in reading any work without a total grasp of the writer's cultural context we miss *something*—as we do, indeed even in our own time and language, as (for example) non-Catholics reading a contemporary Catholic novelist. But it does not follow *even* on this view, let alone from more commonsensical considerations, that it is all right to prefer a misapprehension in our own terms—a "re-enactment"—rather than to work at making the very best possible of a bad job.

Pound is commonly represented as the initiator of the "modern" method of translation. Fortunately, this is not to be taken without some reservations. For the Poundian method of mistranslation is a special one—not "imitation," nor yet loose additions, but a fairly strict adherence to the text for the purpose of render-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE COLLECTED KOESTLER

Arthur Koestler's Collected Works in the uniform Danube Edition

AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

Arrow in the Blue 45s/£2.25
The Invisible Writing 50s/£2.50
Dialogue with Death 30s/£1.50
Scum of the Earth 35s/£1.75

FICTION:

The Gladiators 30s/£1.50
Thieves in the Night 30s/£1.50
Arrival and Departure 30s/£1.50
The Age of Longing 35s/£1.75
(November 1970)

LIFE SCIENCES:

The Sleepwalkers 45s/£2.25
The Act of Creation 45s/£2.25

ESSAYS AND POLEMICS:

The Lotus and the Robot
30s/£1.50
The Yogi and the Commissar
30s/£1.50
Trail of the Dinosaur *and*
Reflections on Hanging 35s/£1.75
(November 1970)

Hutchinson

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing it often word for word, with, however, the wrong word substituted on the grounds that it *looks* like the original, or alternately the right words put in the wrong order to give the opposite meaning to that of the original. "The Parthians shall get used to our statuary and acquire a Roman religion," for example, replaces

Assuescent Latio Partha tropaea Iovi

The method is in fact *Tachisme*, a technique in which the original substratum is only accidentally relevant. And the rare lapses into a reasonable literalness are sometimes saved by a judiciously inserted particle which reverses the original sense, as in Pound's rendering of the last two lines of Propertius' Book II Elegy 26.

I would myself add, with such critics as Graves, Larkin, Grigson and Enright, that the result is unimpressive as English verse. But even those who take the opposite view should at any rate concede that considered as a representation of Propertius, it goes far beyond the most libertine theories of translation. (As far as I know, Dr. Davie is the only Poundian to accept this). However it is looked at, Pound retains neither the meaning, nor the specific poetic virtues, nor the personal tone, nor the form (scarcely even the mere fact of a strict form being in the original at all). And even if we assumed that it was successful in some other way, Dryden's devastating criticism of the whole notion stands:

> "tis not always that a man will be contented to have a present made him, when he expects payment of a debt."

Some at least of the loose variations of the past were presents worth having, largely because they were seldom undertaken in a wanton, *self*-expressive vein. As for Fitzgerald, I suppose (*pace* Mr. Burgess) that the Persian, though an extraordinarily easy language to learn, is not one of the great affluents of our own culture. Perverse though Fitzgerald's method is, it is not an attempt to ruin, before our very eyes, something which is already, but precariously, in our possession. On the other side, Swift's or Dryden's imitations were versions of or variations on originals every educated man knew, or had easy access to. Moreover, they preserved the key lines: "The smoke, and wealth, and noise of *Rome*!"

But as fewer and fewer people are genuinely at home in a dead or foreign language, as we approach (culturally speaking) a condition which has not affected this country since the Rescript of Honorius, translations are wanted more and more, but are more and more able to pass muster without their misleadingness becoming widely known. Better the originals and prose than this half-art. "Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two" was once a joke. Nowadays Dr. Steiner actually prints—a bad example indeed—

Distinguishing marks if any? (O anthropometrics!)
Now the thumbprints for filing.
Colour of hair? of eyes? or hands? O Bertillon!

And this (by Mr. Basil Bunting) is meant to represent—Villon! One can only imagine that it was put in with a view to making Pound and so on a welcome change, as with "Hiawatha's Photographing"—

And so fearful was the picture
In comparison the others
Might be thought to have succeeded
—To have partially succeeded.

From the manifestos one would imagine that we might be getting set before us a full repoeticising of all major foreign verse. As well as some dreadful little rats the mountain has produced some very attractive mice, and even the odd gazelle, basset hound or dolphin. But these don't, as implied, cover the range of necessary culture—or even a good part of it. Nor is the "necessary" inevitably successful. In a way it is true (as Steiner says) that each generation, or century, *needs* its own translation of Homer. His mistake seems to be to assume that because we need them we are bound to get them, that the *Zeitgeist* will provide. No; this is a sphere in which we will rarely and erratically be satisfied. A modern translation of Homer would be splendid. But even the best ones (like Robert Fitzgerald's) are no better than respectable, while as for the worst, like the "survivance" Homer (by Mr. Christopher Logue), they give at most a certain energy at a Mickey Spillane level—which is something, no doubt, but not enough for the occasion.

Logue conveys urgency by having Achilles cry that the Greeks must attack "Immediately—*at once*," a method which is, of course, not only not Homeric, but remote from any form of real poetic at all. It is more "readable," more easily assimilable, than adult modes of emphasis, just as a strip cartoon is more easily assimilable than Anthony Powell.

For Logue's view of actually translating the *Iliad* seems to be that it is necessary at all costs to render it palatable to a modern audience. The sort of audience he has in mind is clear enough: it is one that cannot tolerate regularity in verse; that requires formal and subtle words to be rendered by short and obscene ones; that loses interest unless continually titillated by typographical variety; and that must have its images taken, at whatever price in anachron-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

God's First Love

Christians and Jews
over two thousand years

FRIEDRICH HEER

The questions posed in Hochhuth's *The Representative* of the guilt of the Christian churches in condoning Hitler's anti-Semitic policies are here presented in a far wider context. Professor Heer raises the more penetrating question of the positive guilt of Christianity in *fostering* anti-Semitism throughout its history, and presents a challenge to all Christians to work towards a true reconciliation with the essential Jewish origins of their faith. 90s

Europe Since Hitler

WALTER LAQUEUR

In this book, the first of its kind, Professor Laqueur traces the political developments, the economic and social trends and the cultural movements in Europe since Hitler's death in 1945 and up to the Czech crisis. He deals in authoritative detail with the period of postwar recovery, the cold war, the movement for European unification and its setbacks and the 'thaw' in the East-West relations in the late 1950s. 65s

Weidenfeld & Nicolson 5 Winsley Street London W1

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ism, from the immediate present—as with a reference to "Cape Kennedy." (Perhaps this is the motive—it is difficult to think of another—for telling us that Achilles' armour is made of "tungsten.") But clearly such an audience is one that doesn't want Homer at all, so the work seems quite supererogatory. (Leaning over backwards to be fair, one does at least find, quite often, passages which—unlike those of Bunting and Zukofsky—show something of an "ear.")

On the other hand, how good on the whole are our present translations of Horace (such as that of Mr. James Michie, who has also just published a good, though not quite so good, Catullus[4]) and Richard Wilbur's Molière too: felicity and balance rather than intensity seem to make the best targets. Auden has said of Cavafy that though the linguistic barrier in verse is almost insuperable, yet paradoxically a *personality* may come through clear, even in quite various translations. This is doubtless part of what Dr. Johnson meant when he spoke of "the proper choice of style" as the crux. But in those poets whose personal tone is most marked, a similar personality is required at the other end of the translation. And thus, for example, Robert Lowell does very well with Baudelaire. Indeed, in a curious way Baudelaire seems to compensate for that lack of a central core to be found in most of Lowell's own verse. The personality overlap is by no means complete, of course, but joined to a similar rigour of form it carries one over what would have been thought fatal lapses (like blunting the key word of the key line of the *Voyage à Cythère*, with "only the pageant of immortal sin," for "*le spectacle ennuyeux de l'immortel péché.*") On the other hand, Lowell was mistaken, it seems to me, in undertaking a translation of Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*.[5] Here we still find a proper respect for the original, both in form and in meaning, with only the rarest lapse ("No one will give the dog a bone" is a curious rendering of the literal "It is a woman ill" but at least even this is the result of heavy pressure from the rhyme scheme, a good thing to be under heavy pressure from.) The more basic error arises in rendering the literal

> *And innocent Russia writhed*
> *Under blood-stained boots*
> *Under the wheels of Black Marias*

as

> *Russia convulsed, as ominous*
> *removal trucks and black*
> *police boots broke her back.*

The removal trucks are no doubt a mistake of his Russian translator, but the insertion of "ominous" is something more. In the first place they weren't omens of anything; they were the thing itself. But more importantly—and this error pervades the whole translation—Akhmatova is a cool, classical, and restrained poet, and in this cycle on her sufferings in connection with the execution of her husband and imprisonment of her son, the emotional effect is direct and does not need noisy adjectival emphasis. This is only to say that there is a temperamental divergence, which is also a stylistic one, between herself and Robert Lowell, which it was impossible to bridge. (She was still alive when this translation appeared, and greatly disliked it.) Something similar could be said about Lowell's Racine, kept rolling by a kinaesthetic energy which is quite alien to the original. In both cases, Lowell can at least retort that he has made the attempt, a not inconsiderable one, and that those who carp cannot yet point to anything better. A proportion of effort, in this as in other fields, is bound to be wasted. And all we are now saying is that a man working within the acceptable conventions may be a good translator on one occasion and not on another. One notes the same of Roy Campbell, who, with his splendid St. John of the Cross, is hardly worth reprinting on Baudelaire—Steiner's collection uses the Campbell Baudelaire but omits Roy Fuller's two Baudelaire sonnets, while Campbell's "imitation" from the superbly untranslatable *Mireio* would have seemed to qualify but doesn't. And what is Steiner doing with Gilbert Murray's sub-Swinburniana? One would have thought them an extreme Right-wing deviation, unless their sloppy padding of the original modernises them. And as for missing excellencies, each critic to his own, but I cannot but regret among others Day Lewis' fine though flawed *Cimetière Marine*; Aldous Huxley's *Jeune Parque* too, I think; Henley's Villon, Norman Cameron's *Bâteau Ivre* (the first, *New Verse* version, not the dodecasyllabic revision); some Tremenheere Propertius; some Mackail Homer; and so on. The most scandalous is probably the absence of anything from Donald Davie's Mickiewiecz. Davie also has as good Pasternak as any and manages—as any more than tolerable translation of him must—rhyme, his "entrance ticket to poetry."

AND THAT LEADS ME BACK to Lowell, apart from Pound the current favourite among modern translators. We must distinguish. As we have seen, much of the time, and at his best, he remains within the limits roughly stated by Pope. But he does also indulge in (and defend)

[4] *The Poems of Catullus.* Translated by James Michie. Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969.
[5] *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1965.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

excesses which, far more than his genuine translations, have got him accepted by Moab. His liberties are even then not of the extreme Poundian type. Still, the lapses are grave, as with a poem he calls "Hamlet in Russia, A Soliloquy." He has put together two of Pasternak's poems—first an early lyric, *Slozha Vesla* from the 1917 series "Diversions of the Beloved" (into which he has inserted a verse from another early poem); second, "Hamlet," the first of the *Zhivago* poems, written over thirty years later in a totally different tone. The only thing the three poems have in common is that they are in rhymed quatrains; but the translation is not. As to the method of rendering this disparate material, the penultimate line of the Russian goes, "I'm alone, all sinks (or drowns) in Pharisaism." Lowell gives us,

> *but I'm alone, and there is none . . .*
> *All's drowned in the sperm and spittle*
> *of the Pharisee*

—than which nothing more unPasternakian can be imagined. Nor, I think, would any apart from those who represent Lowell as, unlike Homer, incapable of nodding, maintain that the piece as a whole is a success, even at its own level, or levels.[6] But the worst of it is that we find here a writer capable of normal rigour who has been seduced by bad doctrine, not the least of Moab's crimes. This is not to be taken as a general denigration. It has been rare for more than half the work, if that, of any poet writing in English to be even tolerable, and susceptibility to the flashier modes of the moment has been one of the main causes. To have written one or ten excellent poems is not a thing that can be cancelled, even by reams of bathos and eccentricity. But neither can the prestige of a poet's best work exempt his failures from criticism. That way lies the total collapse of standards, rather than the partial collapse we already have.

In this brief conspectus we have ranged from the Zukofskyan worst to the Lowellian best. In every case we have found Pope's chimera indulging its caprices. One either thinks all these procedures justifiable or one doesn't. What is clear is that they are not "translation," or even "imitation" in the old definition. They fob us off with something which, parasitical on an original text, and cloaked in the prestige of an earlier and greater name—even claiming to give those conveniently indefinable qualities the "spirit" or "truth" of the original—is no more, from the point of view of the art, than what the psychologists call an "attention-getting device." But the ancient and foreign literatures are real. For many of us the victims writhing mutilated on the altars of Chemosh are not just lay figures: their screams are frightful to hear.

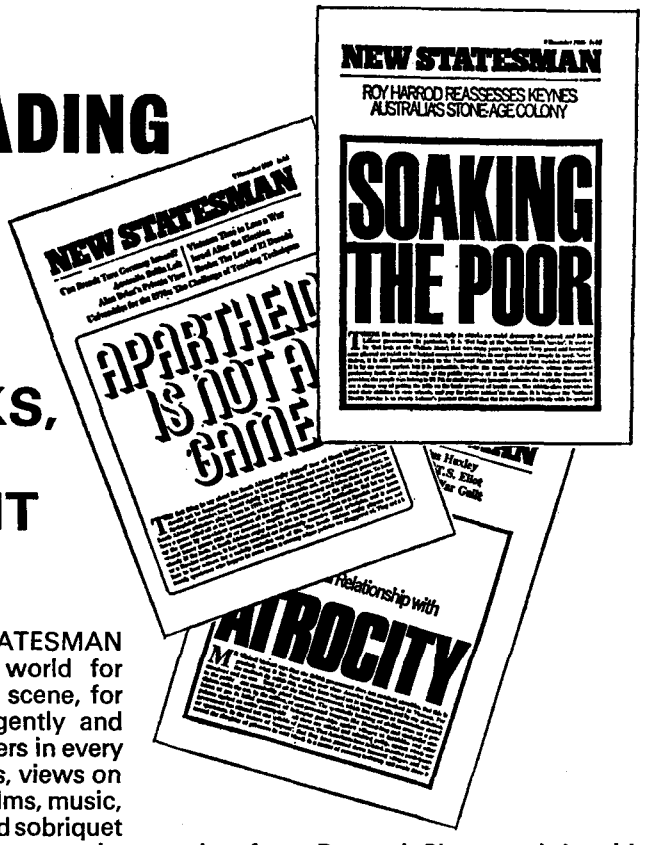
The Moabite penetration of the literary and artistic establishment of course goes far beyond this particular field. But a glance at it may remind us, as much as anything, of the need for vigilance. We need not be too discouraged by the pervasiveness of these infiltrations and obfuscations: after all, the prophets prevailed in the end, and Moab was their washpot. All the same, we are not out of trouble yet, not by any means.

---

[6] A lesser point, which might indeed arise in any type of translation, is that "Hamlet" contains a line directly quoted from the Bible: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."—*Matthew* 26:39. Not to keep this is anyhow to miss much. To alter it, as Lowell does, to "all things are possible with thee—take away this cup," destroys Christ's point as well as Pasternak's. For He goes on, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BRITAIN'S LEADING *VIEWS*PAPER



POLITICS, BOOKS, THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

For more than 50 years the NEW STATESMAN has been famous throughout the world for its pungent comment on the current scene, for the independence of its views, cogently and forcefully argued by authoritative writers in every field: views on politics and economics, views on social affairs, views on books, plays, films, music, the visual arts. Hence the well-deserved sobriquet 'Britain's leading viewspaper'. Hardly an eminent writer from Bernard Shaw and Arnold Bennett to Graham Greene and V. S. Pritchett has not contributed to the columns of the NEW STATESMAN. Hardly a distinguished statesman or teacher has not read it. Over half a million people in all parts of the world read it every week – thinking men and women of all backgrounds and occupations. Week after week the NEW STATESMAN's views are quoted in the press and on radio and television all over the world.

'BOOKS SPECIALS' this month:
1 May: MAY BOOKS 15 May: CHILDREN'S BOOKS

NEW STATESMAN

Every Friday, one shilling and sixpence

To: NEW STATESMAN, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ
I am not already a reader and accept your offer.
Please send me 30 issues for only £1.
I enclose £1 ($2.50) ☐ Please bill me ☐
(tick appropriate box)

(Block letters please)

Name.....

Address.....

E570

UNDER-HALF-PRICE OFFER: 30 issues £1 ($2.50)

If you are not already a reader of the NEW STATESMAN, you can try 30 doses of this weekly mental tonic for only £1 or $2.50. *(Regular rate 30 for 55s or $6.60).*

◀ POST THIS COUPON TODAY

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mirable Annals

By Anthony Burgess

WHAT a year that was! There was Jane Austen's *Love and Freindship and Other Early Works Now First Printed from the Original MS*, with a preface by G. K. Chesterton. Galsworthy published *The Man of Property, In Chancery* and *To Let* as a major triad called *The Forsyte Saga*. From Aldous Huxley came *Mortal Coils*, and from D. H. Lawrence *Aaron's Rod* and *England, My England*. Katherine Mansfield published *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, Rebecca West *The Judge*, Virginia Woolf *Jacob's Room*. It was the year of Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt*, Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* and Gertrude Stein's *Geography and Plays*. It was also the year of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which Virginia Woolf called a misfire: "The book is diffuse. It is brackish. It is pretentious.... A first-rate writer respects writing too much to be tricky; startling; doing stunts." D. H. Lawrence said: "What old and hard-worked staleness, masquerading as the all-new!" There was also David Garnett's *Lady into Fox*.

That was just some of the fiction. In poetry, Blunden, de la Mare, Yeats, Carl Sandburg and A. E. Housman produced volumes; T. S. Eliot produced *The Waste Land*. Edith Sitwell delivered her *Façade* poems over a Sengerphone (a special amplifier named for its inventor), to the accompaniment of music by young William Walton. Ezra Pound translated Rémy de Gourmont's *Physique de l'amour*. The one-volume edition of *The Golden Bough* appeared. Also Forster's *Alexandria*, Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Clive Bell's *Since Cézanne*, Somerset Maugham's *On a Chinese Screen*, Middleton Murry's *Countries of the Mind*. And e.e. cummings's *The Enormous Room*.

Proust died at 51, "of exhaustion and chronic asthma aggravated by bronchitis," but he saw his *Sodome et Gomorrhe II* in print. Brecht wrote his first play—*Baal*. Cocteau had two works out—*Vocabulaire* and *Le Secret Professionnel*. From Pirandello came *Enrico IV*, from Hesse *Siddhartha*, from Valéry *Charmes*, from Stefan Zweig *Amok*. Two plays of Maugham were running—*East of Suez* and *Rain*. Eugene O'Neill, who got the Pulitzer that year for *Anna Christie*, put on *The Hairy Ape*. The James Tait Black Prize went to Walter de la Mare for *Memoirs of a Midget* and to Lytton Strachey for *Queen Victoria*. Eliot got the Dial Award. Charles Ives published, at his own expense, *114 Songs with Postface*. Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* had its first screening. Robert McAlmon started Contact Editions in Paris and prepared to publish Hemingway in the following year. *The Criterion* made its debut. So did, at Nashville, Tennessee, *The Fugitive* (Ransom, Tate, Penn Warren, etc.).

Lawrence arrived at Mabel Dodge Luhan's ranch. Ronald Firbank paid a visit to Haiti ("They say the President is a *Perfect Dear!*"). George Orwell, nineteen years old, left Eton and started his Burmese days. V. S. Pritchett, at twenty-two, appeared in print for the first time with a joke in the *New York Herald*. Vladimir Nabokov, twenty-three, took his degree in Slavic and Romance Languages at Cambridge, England. W. H. Auden, fifteen, decided he had to be a poet. T. E. Lawrence published eight copies of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and then enlisted in the R.A.F. as J. H. Ross, serial number 352087.

THIS IS NO COMPOSITE *annus mirabilis* but a single genuine year—1922. By God, what a genius we had then, as Swift almost put it. But any long-dead year has a trick of being artistically mirable (1939, for instance, with *Finnegans Wake, Goodbye to Berlin, After Many a Summer, The Map of Love, Tropic of Capricorn, The Family Reunion* and so on, with Yeats and Freud and Ford Madox Ford dying and *The Criterion* closing down). A lot depends on how the year is gutted and filleted. Read, as I did recently, through the two 1922 volumes of *Punch* and little seems to be going on in the book world, except for A. A. Milne and *If Winter Comes*. Robert Phelps and Peter

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Deane, who have made a "scrapbook almanac of the Anglo-American literary scene from 1900 to 1950,"[1] are very acceptable chroniclers, and I personally am not prepared to carp about such omissions as Henry James' big *TLS* articles on the contemporary novel in 1916, in which Hugh Walpole and Compton Mackenzie are the coming men and Lawrence hangs in the dusty rear, or Gustav Holst dying in the same year (1934) as Delius and Elgar, or the first edition (1924) of *Augustus Carp, Esq.*

The point in compiling such a book at all (and it was done originally for private pleasure) must be love of literature, literature as a thing that certain men and women have made (children too: Miss Daisy Ashford published *The Young Visiters*—whose spelling is, alas, silently corrected here—in 1919), not literature as *Ph.D.* stuff or a repository of social significance or eternal wisdom. The creators of books become creatures of glamour, like pop-stars, gossip-column figures whose photographs are to be hotly breathed over. As a writer of books myself I do not disapprove of this. Nor, I think, did, or do, many of the writers featured here. They have, like Eliot's roses, the look of flowers that are looked at—pipe-crunching Stephen Crane, Colette demurely leaning on Willy, Wells (1905) as earnest charmer, Mrs. Wharton like an RA *genre* painting, Jack London as Ashanti warrior, Mark Twain as Yankee Prophet, Sara Teasdale as The Soul's Awakening, Wyndham Lewis as Anarchist, Maugham as Ashenden, Gosse—patting George Moore patronisingly—as bloody old fool trying to look like GOM of English letters.

And, for the most part, how handsome they were, in youth anyway. The weight of years sits heavily on authors, trenching, riving and raddling. Elizabeth Bowen is an exception, as remarkable-looking on 24 December 1969, in an inn in New Jersey, as in 1919, writing her first story in the attic of her aunt's villa in Harpenden. To which woman author should, on the evidence of this album, the palm of beauty be awarded? Anaïs Nin, in a bathing costume, is a strong contender; Katherine Anne Porter, in a taffeta gown in a garden, tries hard; the very young Mary McCarthy is almost heartbreakingly winsome; Virginia Woolf allows, in the Bloomsbury manner, intellect to swamp beauty; Rebecca West, as free young woman writer with quill, destined for the arms of H. G. Wells, probably wins. When the women are ugly there are no half-measures: Amy Lowell went terribly to fat; Gertrude Stein, in her many portraits, looks like a frowsty Victorian widow; the Widow of Windsor herself—her presence justified because she kept diaries, stuck between exophthalmic Lafcadio Hearn and James Joyce BA—looks remarkably like Oscar Wilde.

WHEN THE MEN are not brooding over their work (Rainer Maria Rilke is a terrifying brooder), they are being sportsmen or soldiers. The most soldierly is Wilfred Owen; Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald come next. A lot of them smoke cigarettes (Conrad's account of the cairn of fag-ends that accumulated over the last pages of *Lord Jim* is frightening), but no author dies of cancer of the lung. On the other hand, there are too many deaths from cerebral tumours and tuberculosis. With all the photographs jumbled in our heads, we end with a heartening impression less of bookishness than of love of adventure and the great outdoors. Hemingway, in Basque beret and film-star moustache, pets a bull; T. E. Lawrence rides a camel; Stephen Spender is in the Fire Service. There is, unfortunately, no picture of Auden as a U.S. major.

The book is beautifully free from literary judgments. Instead, we get cracker mottoes, like Graham Greene's "Every creative writer worth our consideration is a victim: a man given over to an obsession," or Louis MacNeice's "It is a virtue in a novelist that his point is able to be missed," or Virginia Woolf's "I-I-I—how we have lost the secret of saying that!" or William Empson's (right for 1940) "The waste remains, the waste remains and kills." There are also fascinating factual snippets, like how much money E. M. Forster inherited from his Aunt Marianne, thus freeing him to write his five novels, and how Eliot's O.M. was bestowed on him by the White Goddess. It was Eliot who decided that Graves's book on her had to be published "at all costs":

> The first editor to whom Graves sent the manuscript rejected it, regretfully; he died of a heart attack a month later. The second decided the book would be of interest to no one; he presently hanged himself from a tree, attired in a woman's bra and panties. Fortunately for Publishers Row, Eliot was the third.

The compilers did right in chronicling, on the margin, events in fields other than the literary. It is important, when comparing the progress of literature and, say, music in the modern period to work from the solidity of dates, and to pluck one date from one palm then another from another is wearisome work. In his *Music Ho!* (seminal musicology whose publication—1934—is unlisted here) Constant Lambert points out how backward literature was, compared with music, at the beginning of

[1] *The Literary Life*, Chatto & Windus, 45s.; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $15.00.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the modern era. Oscar Wilde has one of his dialoguists pining for music as decadent as Huysman's prose and able to find only the "curiously coloured things" of, God help us, Dvorak. This scrapbook shows the extent of the backwardness. In the year of Victoria's death, when the latest verse was by Binyon, Meredith, Alice Meynell and Bliss Carman, Schoenberg had already started his *Gurrelieder*. In 1911, the year of *Petrouchka* and *L'Heure Espagnole*, as well as *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and Handy's *Memphis Blues*, there was *Zuleika Dobson* in fiction and Rupert Brooke in poetry. 1912 heard *Pierrot Lunaire* but read *The Matador of the Five Towns*, *L'Annonce Faite à Marie* and Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage*. 1913 saw Paris rioting over *Le Sacre du Printemps* but London calmly reading Kipling and Mark Rutherford. By 1922, thanks to Joyce and Eliot, literature had caught up with music; by 1939, with *Finnegans Wake*, it was well ahead.

YOU SEE, THEN, one of the uses of this book. But it is best taken primarily—and this is appropriate to this celebratory issue of ENCOUNTER—as a cocktail party convened for no purpose but to rejoice in the fact that literature is practised and to toast its practitioners. Or, if you like, it is an act of faith in the power of writers and writing to survive. In 1939, when *The Criterion* was closing down, Eliot said that "the continuity of culture may have to be maintained by a very small number indeed. . . ." Just ten years later, in the final issue of *Horizon*, Cyril Connolly sighed that it was "closing time in the gardens of the West and from now on an artist will be judged only by the resonance of his solitude or the quality of his despair. . . ." There are jauntier voices resounding today, talking of the coming of the Electronic Village and the supersession of alphabetic communion by a kind of neural assault which requires less intellectual effort than reading ever did. Messrs. Phelps and Deane themselves are prepared to see books become joky antiques under glass "for the antiquarian touch no well-appointed room can be without." Or so they say; there is no real sunset touch in their literary passion.

In a sense, of course, real books are already dying. The hardback is for libraries; what most people actually read is the less durable paperback, whose typographical errors the author has no opportunity to correct, and it is likely that certain kinds of books—the serious small-sale novel, for instance—will die of despair because there is no profit in them for the paperback entre-

G. L. Brook
The Language of Dickens
'A book for addicts—of Dickens or of words. Better still of both.' Margaret Lane, *Daily Telegraph* 42s

George Mikes
The Land of the Rising Yen-*Japan*
A fascinating book about a fascinating people, and salted with splendid jokes. *Illustrated* 25s

May books
Helen Vlachos
House Arrest
The Greek newspaper proprietor's account of life under house arrest, interspersed with witty and frank reminiscence. 7 May *Illustrated* 30s

Christopher Lasch
The Agony of the American Left
A critical survey of 20th-century American radicalism. 7 May 42s

Winston Burdett
Encounter with the Middle East
An intimate report on what lies behind the Arab–Israeli conflict, by a roving CBS correspondent with extensive experience in the Middle East. 21 May 50s

André Deutsch

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

preneur. But there are other modes of publication which, sometimes shrugging off the very idea of profit, bring us back to the cenobitic pre-Caxton times, when the author passed his own book around in holograph or a few loving copies done in pen and ink. There is a young man in New York, apparently, who sells photostat copies of his own first novel at forty dollars. From San Francisco I receive Xeroxed copies of a *roman fleuve* in progress—a kind of theological interpretation of the Popeye cartoons. Ultimately we have to realise that the book, like the alphabet itself, is a marvellous and unique invention—permanent, portable, private, no slave to indurable clockwork or unreliable electricity—and that authors are not less cherishable than entertainers who cease to exist when the current fails.

Art, if You Like

On Larkin as Jazz Critic — By JOHN WAIN

PHILIP LARKIN acted as jazz-record critic for the *Daily Telegraph* for some seven years and he still contributes a fortnightly column. His collection *All What Jazz*[1] gathers up some (all? most of?) his pieces and introduces them with an account of what happened to him in the course of the job. The result is a book whose interest goes a long way beyond its immediate occasion, and could profitably be read, or looked through, by people who do not care whether one jazz player, or band, is better than another. For what happened to Mr. Larkin in respect of one particular art, jazz, has happened, could happen, and may increasingly and unavoidably happen to other people in respect of other arts. So that important general questions arise.

Mr. Larkin begins his introduction by explaining how he stood at the time when it was first suggested to him that he should write jazz criticism. Up to then, his listening had been regular and passionately attentive, but blessedly hedonistic. He had listened to those jazz musicians he liked listening to, and given the others a polite miss. "The others," of course, meant the modernists, the men who had got going in about 1944 when, as Charlie Parker put it, "we'd play around with flatted fifths," and went rapidly on through the bop era to the reign of Miles Davis and John Coltrane, and finally to the extreme totalitarian dictatorship of hard-line musicians like Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler. This latter development was still in the future when Mr. Larkin signed on for the *Telegraph*, and to follow the reviews is to see the situation unfolding before his appalled eyes (and ears).

At the beginning, it did not seem to matter much that Larkin knew very little about the newer jazz; he had been listening to the parent music for so long, and with so much enjoyment, that he felt confident of getting used to its offspring fairly quickly. He planned, in short, to educate himself at the expense of the paper, which is something we have all had to do to some extent, since, as Aristotle remarks somewhere, "we learn to do things by doing the things we are learning to do...." He set off hopefully; each parcel contained some examples of the kind of thing he knew perfectly and criticised with loving exactness, and some examples of the kind of thing he was still finding his way about. His policy with the latter was to deal with them kindly, on the grounds that, if you don't understand something very well, no one will mind if you dismiss it with vague praise, whereas to attack it you need to be sure of your ground.

All went well, or half-well, for some time; but the new jazz never found its way into Mr. Larkin's affections, and gradually he realised that his initial premise had been wrong. The new music, though linked by some associations with the old, was not a development of it, but something that had started *ab avo* in the late 1940s and '50s. Although it was all loosely shovelled together as "jazz," there was really no reason why a person who responded to, and admired, the jazz of the first four decades of the century should like or understand the sound that took its place in the fifth.

Once this understanding broke in, Mr. Larkin had two possible choices. One was to hang up his turntable, to sign off as quickly as possible and try to forget about the whole episode. The other was to fight back; to point out that he had been hired as a jazz critic and that the jabberings of Coltrane or the screechings of Albert Ayler were not jazz and should be called something else. He chose the second.

[1] *All What Jazz*. By PHILIP LARKIN. Faber & Faber, 35s.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The book becomes increasingly militant: "There was many a time," Mr. Larkin recalls, "when I substituted 'challenging' for 'insolent,' 'adventurous' for 'excruciating' and 'colourful' for 'viciously absurd' in a thoroughly professional manner"; but these bits of Newspeak generally come near the beginning of the volume. As the years went on, Mr. Larkin made up his mind that he saw nothing to applaud in the new crypto-jazz and was damned if he was going to say he did. The position became firmer and more tolerable in his own eyes because it was increasingly related to his general position *vis-à-vis* the arts, both as a practitioner and as a critic. Not only does Mr. Larkin not like modern jazz, he doesn't like modern anything. His introductory essay contains a challenging (and I don't mean "insolent") rejection of

> modernism, whether perpetrated by Parker, Pound or Picasso: it helps us neither to enjoy nor endure. It will divert us as long as we are prepared to be mystified or outraged, but maintains its hold only by being more mystifying and more outrageous: it has no lasting power.

Well! Confronted by a position-statement as large, as monolithic, as uncompromising as this, what can we say? It's a facer, isn't it, boys? (For Mr. Larkin must not be the only one to use that happiest of code-signals, the quotation too famous for quote-marks.) Obviously one must either react at book-length, or merely indicate that a position has been taken up and leave it at that, which is what I propose to do here. (Except that, if it is a matter of standing up to be counted, I would wish to be taken as *for* Mr. Larkin's attitude to modernism rather than against it. As I write, we in Oxford are preparing ourselves for the beatific experience of sitting through Beckett's latest play, which, we are promised, lasts thirty seconds, has no dialogue and no actors, and whose *mise en scène* consists of rubbish casually dumped on to the stage; the impresario who is bringing it over has described it as "intellectually impeccable"—it must, I suppose, use the snaffle and the curb all right, but where, etc.?)

What interests me at the moment, however, is something altogether different, and rather to one side of the question of whether Mr. Larkin's dismissal of modernism is justified or not. All the time I was reading the book, I was haunted by a feeling of *déjà vu*. This situation, somewhere, somehow, had met me before. But it did not come to the surface until I chanced on a newspaper announcement of a

DONALD MACLEAN

British Foreign Policy Since Suez

This major study of Britain's world role since 1956 comes from the ex-British diplomat who now lives and works in the Soviet Union, studying the problems dealt with in this book.

The author writes: "The book's particular object is to elucidate the direction in which British foreign policy has been and is moving by analysing both the attitude of the policy-makers to the main problems confronting them and the actual course of British diplomacy in certain key areas".

The book is divided into three parts, dealing with problems arising in Britain's relations with the other Western powers, with the third world and with the Communist powers.

Coming in May 55s

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PENGUIN MODERN STORIES

('a welcome new series' – Oscar Turnill *Sunday Times)*

1 **William Sansom, Jean Rhys, David Plante and Bernard Malamud** 4s
'All four writers show their mastery of the medium and there can be very little doubt about the series being a success if the standards of this first number are maintained '.– *Morning Star*

2 **John Updike, Sylvia Plath and Emanuel Litvinoff** 4s
'We gratefully accept the good four bob's worth that Penguin are now offering in quarterly packages . . . splendid value' *Times Literary Supplement*

3 **Philip Roth, Margaret Drabble, Jay Neugeboren and Giles Gordon** 4s
'Contains some excellent fiction. Philip Roth's story *An Actor's Life for Me* is a beautifully cool account of the rise and fall of marital passion' Alan Bold *Tribune*

4 **Sean O'Faolain, Nadine Gordimer, Shiva Naipaul and Isaac Babel** 4s
Published 28 May

SUBSCRIBE

Penguin Modern Stories is published quarterly. You can become a regular subscriber by completing the coupon and posting it (with a cheque or postal order for 18s) to Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex

Name_____

Address_____

_____

fact that, like most other interested people, I have known privately for some time: namely, that Mr. Larkin is at work on the new *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, the one that will replace Yeats'. Then it clicked! Yeats, at the time of getting the invitation to edit the anthology (which he must have known, between the prestige of his own name and that of the Oxford series, would be taken as a standard), was in the same position regarding poetry as Larkin was in regarding jazz when *he* started. That is, he knew that he liked poetry and knew a lot about it, understood that tastes had been changing rapidly, but trusted that his love of the subject would carry him to an understanding of the new modes. His expectation, like Larkin's, was disappointed.

The *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*—the one we have at present, I mean, and have had since 1936—shows Yeats doing a Larkin, both in the selection where he throws in great bucketfuls of third-rate verbiage by poets two or three generations younger than himself and in the Introduction, which shows him politely trying to find praise-words for verse that must have sounded to him as Albert Ayler sounds to Larkin.

"Indeed," he writes helplessly, almost giving up,

> I know of no school where the poets so closely resemble each other. Spender has said that the poetry of belief must supersede that of personality, and it is perhaps a belief shared that has created their intensity, their resemblance; but this belief is not political. If I understand aright this difficult art the contemplation of suffering has compelled them to seek beyond the flux *something unchanging, inviolate, that country* where no ghost haunts, no beloved lures because it has neither past nor future.

As a description of the work of the young "modernists" of the 1930s this is unhelpful, just as Yeats' choice of what poems should represent that generation is, for the most part, merely floundering. (More Day Lewis than Auden; a slab of Barker but no Dylan Thomas; *u.s.w.*) Obviously his policy was the one Larkin started out with: if you don't understand, praise vaguely; give them a fair representation, and perhaps it will all come out in the wash.

And the parallel does not end there. A similar *éclaircissement* came to Yeats as to Larkin. He does not, like the later poet, manage to incorporate it within the same book; it is to be found in "Under Ben Bulben," that last poem in his last volume, when he is virtually writing his own epitaph, and suddenly addresses,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in ringing tones, those who will inherit his mantle:

Irish poets, learn your trade,
Sing whatever is well made,
Scorn the sort now growing up
All out of shape from toe to top—

That is what Yeats finally decided he really thought about the poets he had so politely made room for in the *Oxford Book*.

Yeats made a mess of the *Oxford Book*. But not a total mess. Where he was guided solely by what he liked, he sought out many excellent things that would otherwise have no currency at all. (James Stephens' "Egan O Rahilly," for instance.) Where rubbish got in, it did so because he was trying to be fair, and representative, and range over the terrain "as the hawk sees it, or the helmeted airman." It may be that one day we shall look back on this collection of Larkin's, not perhaps very momentous in itself, and see its importance in the fact that its author learnt that lesson—to listen as one man and to choose as one man—*before* assembling his Hall of Fame.

An Antidote to Lévi-Strauss

By Francis Huxley

THE DISREPUTABLE TITLE of this book[1] which also describes itself as an *Etude Gastrophonique de la Marmythologie Musiculinaire*, serves as a useful warning of what to expect within its covers, and of the lamentably interesting motives of its authors.[2] The text is composed of a borborygmy of outrageous puns and a series of indelicate stories or "marmyths," and it is accompanied by a superb anthology of 315 illustrations, all showing what symbolic capers the tongue can get up to before linguists lay their hands on it. The frontispiece, for example, shows the goddess Kali with vermilion tongue winsomely gorgonising upon the prostrate body of her consort, Shiva, in a scene of carnage and meadow flowers which the authors call: *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

Déjeuner? Une cuite, rather.[3] That it is gastrophonic and musiculinary is of course in honour of Lévi-Strauss, the body of whose work *Le Cru et le Cuit* lies speechless under one of Kali's azure feet and the authors' four-handed collaboration. A similar visual conundrum can be made out of the end papers, figuring a bas-relief from Landes and titled: "Congress of linguists in the throes of fraternal debate." Of the three monsters shown there, the one with five heads can only stand for Lévi-Strauss in the process of acting out his favourite phrase, *Mais il y a plus*. It is holding paws with a monster whose two heads in phonemic opposition implicate Roman Jacobsen, while the third monster, set somewhat sadly apart, may well stand for Leroi-Gourhan and his researches into the structural sexuality of Paleolithic cave paintings.

It is obvious that we are in for it, and that someone is at last going to poke unexpected and long-awaited fun at the Magister Ludi of our times with his permutative bead-game of myth, music, and cooking. But a joke, as has been remarked, is a very serious thing, especially when aimed at a very serious genius who has made himself King of the Castle in a way to inspire admiration, envy and more or less unavailing criticism. Can a trickster find out his weak place, where others have failed? For there is a saturnine rigour to his thought, and a compulsive air of infallibility to his conclusions, that taxes the mind, and the reader may sometimes feel an ungenerous resentment in having his imagination worked so hard as to deprive it of its freedom. "The imagination continually works at stopping all the fissures through which grace may pass," said Simone Weil. "Imagination filler of the void, effort boundless and exhausting. DANAIDES." Lévi-Strauss paraphrased these words in the last paragraph of his *Tristes Tropiques*, and there is a melancholy satisfaction in offering them as an ambiguous comment upon his own industry. His sieve is, without doubt, of the finest mesh: the problem is to know just what it de-

---

[1] *La Langue Verte et la Cuite*. By ASGER JORN and NOËL ARNAUD. Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1968, 89 Fr. (Hachette, £8 6s. 3d.).

[2] Asger Jorn is a Danish artist, not much known in this country, though a splendid book by Guy Atkins (*Jorn in Scandinavia*, Lund Humphries, 1968) should do much to correct this situation. Noël Arnaud is a surrealist war-horse of many campaigns: see, for instance, his *Encyclopédie des Farces, Attrapes et Mystifications* (Pauvert, 1964).

[3] A drunken revel that will leave your tongue coated green with argot.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

April 16
PATRICK GORDON WALKER
The Cabinet
A comprehensive study of the English Cabinet system and its history, enlivened with anecdotes and personal glimpses of the inner workings of power.
35s

WE
by Yevgeny Zamyatin
The great Russian underground classic of 1920 (still banned in Russia) published here for the first time, with an Introduction by Michael Glenny.
'A better book than either *Brave New World* or *1984*'
PHILIP TOYNBEE, OBSERVER
35s

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER
The Seance
'Magnificent stories...it is intoxicating to find him, a surviving solitary genius among the public windbags and four-letter men, who pass as writers'
DAVID PRYCE-JONES, FINANCIAL TIMES
30s

JONATHAN CAPE

fines out of existence, and what grace appears in the void he thus creates. So it is with a sense of pleasurable outrage that one sees Jorn and Arnaud looming out of the logical inane and trying on the void for size.

WHAT COUNTER-IMAGE of the truth do they represent? *Le Cru et le Cuit*, shortly to be published here in a translation by John and Doreen Weightman,[4] is still unfamiliar enough for a brief résumé of the Lévi-Straussian ethic to be in order. Its basic proposition is that mythological themes are not to be classified under the usual headings of cosmology, seasonal changes, hero figures, or technology; Jung is to be left stewing within his alchemical retort, and Freud under the bed. Rather, they are to be compared to musical themes, to be inverted, reversed or turned inside out in the manner of a fugue, and their structure is to be analysed in terms of codes, armatures and messages. Further to be demonstrated is a logic of sensible qualities, particularly those empirical categories such as raw and cooked, fresh and rotten, wet and burnt, all of them definable by ethnographic observation. This logic then provides us with conceptual tools by which we can disengage abstract notions and articulate them into propositions.

Ever the master of the self-reversed aphorism, Lévi-Strauss declares *à la* Baudelaire: "We do not propose to show how men think in myths, but how myths think themselves in men"—a formula which lets him compare myth to music, in that they both live themselves in you while you hear yourself in them. With this new version of the chicken-and-the-egg problem, which now is like trying to play ping-pong with your own reflection, a new kind of determinism has been born. It is a form of anthropomorphism in reverse: Man being that self-willed instrument played on by figurations from the outside world according to an internal logic as stringent as Lévi-Strauss assures us is demonstrable. And if Lévi-Strauss seems to reverse the direction of this movement, this again demonstrates the truth of what he says: it is

> The doubly reflective progress of two thoughts acting one upon the other of which now one, now the other can be the wick or the spark whose meeting will cause a common illumination.

But there is more: since a myth by such a definition can have no privileged content of its own, it must be possible to show how myths think themselves in each other. So he proceeds to do, working his way through one culture, one region, one society to another (and, in his

[4] *The Raw and the Cooked*. By CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS. Jonathan Cape, 65s.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

later books, into North America as well), examining the gamut of symbols to find those singular variations which will put the whole system into relief, and working out a form of reciprocal translation between their thought and his own. In this way he is able to materialise a network of fundamental mental constraint. As he says, this is a

> supreme gymnastic where the exercise of the faculty of reflection, pushed to its extreme limits ... brings out every muscle and every joint of the skeleton, thus exposing the lineaments of a general anatomical structure.

And if he is to follow him, the reader must willy-nilly do likewise with his own anatomy, and learn the stirrup-leather feat performed by Gymnast when he put Gargantua's enemy, Captain Tripet, to flight: a frisking gambol whose climax is to balance himself by the thumb on the hindbow of his saddle, to be followed by the miller's pass, a somersault, and a hundred other turns and demi-pomades. "Ha," said Captain Tripet, "I will not do that at this time," which was so much the worse for him.

WHAT IS THE OUTCOME of these acrobatics? We learn to begin with that the first myth discussed in *Le Cru et le Cuit*—chosen, typically, because it is untypical—must be about the origin of fire, although it tells how all the cooking fires of the tribe bar one are extinguished. Nevertheless—a pogo stick of a word, much favoured by Lévi-Strauss to cope with apparently fatal objections—the Bororo Indians of Brazil, whose myth it is, "know so well" what the story is *really* about that they include within it all the themes common to fire-myths proper as told by other South American tribes. Here then we find the boy who goes birds'-nesting with his brother-in-law, the jaguar and his wife, the vultures attracted by putrefying flesh, and other arcane matters. And if we decide with Lévi-Strauss that what some tribes call fire the Bororo see as anti-fire, this is for a good reason, which we may discover by the use of algebra and by analysing other myths which can be made to tell of one thing in terms of its opposite. This dialectic becomes increasingly convincing as we progress through the book, and as its author unravels the attributions of South American flora, fauna, astronomy, marriage customs, ritual observances and the like.

But as they are unravelled, what seem to be unanswerable conundrums present themselves. For instance:

> What relationship can there be between, on the one hand, the response to the call of the rotten tree, the olfactive perception of a stench, the acquisition of a soft penis, the non-perception of a spectacle, the non-ingestion of a worm-in-

New from Phaidon

The Netherlandish Painters of the Seventeenth Century
Volume 1: A-Heda
Walther Bernt Known in the trade as 'the dealer's Bible', this first English edition of a most important reference work lists 800 artists and contains 1,460 reproductions. (Volumes II & III will follow later this year) *11 × 9½ ins* £15

Problems in Titian:
Mostly Iconographic
Erwin Panofsky An expanded version of the Wrightsman Lectures. The author makes numerous new and stimulating suggestions and looks in detail at many religious pictures, historical pictures and portraits. *352 pp., 194 illus.* £5

Grünewald Drawings
Eberhard Rühmer Grünewald has been called, with good reason, 'the most daring of realists and the most daring of idealists'. This book is the complete edition of Grünewald's 40 surviving drawings, some the sole record of now lost works. *104 pp. text, 60 illus.* £3

Otto Benesch: Collected Writings
Volume 1: Rembrandt
Eva Benesch Benesch's main interest lay in the essence and development of Rembrandt's art. This is the first of four volumes of Otto Benesch's collected articles and essays; all 28 essays are on Rembrandt. They include translations of articles originally published in German. *364 pp., 252 illus. 10 × 7 ins* £4 10s

The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci
(2 volumes—third edition)
Jean Paul Richter Embraces the entire field of Renaissance interests. The selection demonstrates the vastness of Leonardo's labours in all aspects of art and science. *Vol. 1: 484 pp., 62 plates. Vol. II: 530 pp., 60 plates* Set: £10

Phaidon Press Ltd · 5 Cromwell Place · SW7

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lord David Cecil's

VISIONARY & DREAMER

Two poetic painters: Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones. 'Lord David does more for both painters than simply to recount their lives. He presents both the visionary and the dreamer in the bright captivating light of his own sympathy' Philip Toynbee, The Observer. 70 illustrations, 2 in colour, 63s

Philip Longworth's

THE COSSACKS

'The first book in English to give the whole of Cossack history . . . a compelling story . . . intensely reliable and comprehensive' Wright Miller, The Guardian. Illustrated, 63s

T. A. Critchley's

CONQUEST OF VIOLENCE

'Critchley contrives throughout to be both scholarly and yet interesting to the general reader. . . . There is, lively historical writing, a keen sense of what is relevant now, and a readiness to make original and illuminating generalisations. 'The more of the electorate who read this book, the better; they will be equipped to form a balanced judgement on this important question' Harry Street, New Society. Illustrated, 45s

Constable

> fested beer and, on the other, the rape of a virgin and the ingestion of roast opossum?

What song *did* the sirens sing? The answer is impossible to give without retracing the entire argument, but for a taste of the method here is one part of the solution.

> Vegetable putrefaction thus connotes normal sexual activity (=conjugal) of woman, the normal chastity (=puerile) of man. And animal putrefaction, the abnormal sexual activity (=rape) of man, the abnormal chastity (=conjugal) of woman.

THE NAME for the dialectic method here employed is structuralism, which in Britain so far is more or less another name for Lévi-Strauss. Though others have tried their hands at the genre, their field of operations is smaller, their conclusions less ambitious. They lack his grand manner, which is that of a Chinese emperor ritually dictating their courses to the sun and moon, and pointing out to them their reflections in the Yellow River. Here he inserts the necessary lemma, there the inescapable pretirition, and balances all within a nest of oppositions. And if in the end we cannot distinguish this nest from the egg of consciousness laid within it, this was his aim and the mark of his success.

But for Lévi-Strauss the egg of consciousness is to be cooked rather than brooded, a process which in turn must be carried out with an eye to the incest tabu and according to the rules of exogamy. Both in its literal and metaphorical forms, the cooking fire preserves man from the rawness of his desires and from the dangers of putrefaction and incest, and staves off the dangers of a social conflagration. Every sense is involved in this cooking, together with all the information they gather and the activities they serve, and however strange the results may taste to us, it is plain that nothing is left half-baked. One principal rule is that, ethnographically, silence is enjoined whenever food is being cooked, whenever a central mediation between opposites is to be successful. Noise, on the other hand, is used to fill the gap between the two terms of a natural pair which are in a state of disjunction: hence the uproars which greet eclipses, or reprehensible unions between the sexes. Noise, uproar, and charivaris of every kind thus represent the "anti-culinary situation."

Turning now to Jorn and Arnaud, it seems possible to interpret their efforts along these lines. Certainly, they have 'pataphysicised words so reprehensibly that they groan with primeval noise, and make them bear such disjunctions of meaning that they explode as they are read, leaving behind curious, complex and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

often nasty smells signalling the presence of some monster with an odd number of legs, or perhaps an irritable Zen master, living at the heart of their labyrinth. And one might conclude either that they have suffered an eclipse of their light-giving faculties, or that they are indulging in socially forbidden matters for a purpose.

We cannot expect two such authors[4] to declare their purposes outright, but it soon becomes apparent that for them problems are to be posed in order not to be answered, or answered in order to make a fool of the problem. They make a point of honour to resolve a contradiction by the use of nonsense, and to synthesise opposites by banging their heads together. It seems then that they are trying to cook within the anti-culinary situation according to a Jarry-esque recipe, and thus give the lie to our latter-day Kant who admits of no transcendental subject[5] but who writes as though he did.

On the one hand, therefore, we have a well-digested musiculinary offering (which, incidentally, relegates painting to a low level of intellectual purity), and on the other, an illustrated 'pataphysics that insists on the priority of the indigestible and unreasonable image in any account of human life. In their own ways, both are against fetichism: one might well call Lévi-Strauss the spoil-sport of his times, since he has not only disintoxicated the power of magic by calling it a semantic function, but has long ago destroyed the academic fetich of totemism to his own satisfaction. This fetich, he says,

> comes from a certain taste for the obscene and the grotesque that is like an infantile sickness of the science of religion; a negative perception of an uncontrollable fear of the sacred, from which the observer has not managed to detach himself.

It is in such a way that he has pulled the usual canons of mythological analysis to pieces, in order to construct a new type of canonical explanation. But for Jorn, at any rate, it is explanation that is the fetich he wishes to destroy, despite his own leanings towards explanation;[6] and whatever his relations to the sacred as a painter may be, Lévi-Strauss' success in detaching himself philosophically from the obscene and the grotesque, both of them close kin to

[4] Jorn and Arnaud are both title holders in the *Collège de 'Pataphysique*.

[5] See *Le Cru et le Cuit*, p. 19, where Lévi-Strauss admits this imputation.

[6] Jorn is the author of a large number of books on diverse subjects in which may be seen his passion for knowledge and his penchant for Lévi-Strauss and intellectual abstractions.

A major new book by

JON KIMCHE

The Second Arab Awakening

Mr Kimche completely reassesses the history of the Middle East from the Arab Revolt of 1916 until the aftermath of the Six-day War of 1967. His book is based on a study of all the relevant records, including crucial documents—only recently revealed—from the British Cabinet archives, from captured Arab papers in the Israeli state archives, and from German sources. In interpreting their significance, Mr Kimche's long experience of Middle Eastern affairs (both as historian and political correspondent), as well as his contacts with both Arab and Jewish leaders, give him unrivalled authority.

With 288 pages, 7 maps, chronology 42s

COMING ON 4 MAY

Thames and Hudson

Alison Lurie

REAL PEOPLE

". . . it is a pleasure to read a book that has really been written, the product of reflection and revision rather than of an instantaneously flowing pen."
Julian Symons, Sunday Times

"Miss Lurie's touch is faultless, cool, clear and extremely funny."
Janice Elliott, Sunday Telegraph

"Miss Lurie writes economically and unpretentiously . . . In the most literal sense, it defies criticism. That, in itself, is a pleasure."
Times Literary Supplement

". . . it is a superb piece of ironic portraiture." *Julian Jebb, The Times*

25s

HEINEMANN

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the indigestible, is that which no doubt has aroused Jorn's emulation and contrariness.

Hence his and Arnaud's correction of the anthropologist. Their method is to *"descarter"* the mind, to confuse it with its own rationality until it regains a sense of immediacy. They have therefore written a commentary—if that is the right word—on a collection of "marmyths" drawn from two Parisian tribes. The first tribe, designated *M* for *Montparnasse*, can be seen from the map thoughtfully provided to occupy such places as the *Observatoire*, the *Panthéon*, and the *Sorbonne*; the second, called *14A* after the 14th *arrondissement*, the *Clinique des Aliénés*, the *Cité Universitaire* and, happy chance, the Rue Brillat Savarin. The dynamyth of the *M* tribe tells of its origins as a group of warriors and cambrioleurs called the Gluttonic people; that of the *14A* tribe speaks of the ancient Glou-Glous. By opposing the culturomorphic tone of the one to the naturomorphic noise of the other, the authors play with the admittedly impossible notion that the origin of both tribes is to be found amongst the primeval Bruitons.

COMING TO ENGLAND?

Visit "Morry's" international newsstand in the Haymarket, London S.W.1 (on the corner of Panton Street, a few yards from American Express).

You can pick up your ENCOUNTER, NEW YORK TIMES, HERALD TRIBUNE – all British, American and Continental magazines. Also Souvenirs, Maps, Post Cards, Views of London. And, don't forget, your current copy of ENCOUNTER.

I shall be pleased to welcome you and help you in any way I can.

MORRY

THE JAPE proceeds. But, as the authors say, from the start their book has to do with *tongues*. The Bororo myth is paralleled by a marmyth in which a tongue, safely at home in its gullet, is detached (or bird's-nested) by a hunter using a stick—hence, alas, the origin of the word linguistick. They proceed to discuss whether words signify things, or things, words, in a parody of inescapable logic, and finally create such confusion with their tail-eating paradoxes and gnomic self-mutilations that the reader has to cling to the one concrete thing allowed him, the reality of the tongue itself. It is here that Jorn's choice of illustrations comes into its own. Who would have thought that so many tongues—from the Congo and Tibet, from New Zealand and Scandinavia—could get up to so many things! To drive home this lesson, Jorn has coloured the tongues—in the otherwise monochrome photographs—green, yellow or red, according to a psiconological and typographical formula known only to himself. Every part of the human body can become a tongue to something else in these pictures, animals of all kinds indulge themselves with tongues, tongues become plants and snakes. They pour out as water or burn up as flame, and some of their owners are proudly bilingual, trilingual, even multilingual. Iconology has here taken off, and soars in a voluptuous flight of tongue for tongue-in-cheek's sake. (It is a shock to check back to Lévi-Strauss and to find that his interest in tongues is solely verbal—a telling omission in such a linguistically orientated anthropologist.)

A typical marmyth on the double nature of the tongue and its more than linguistic abilities concerns a hero about to go on the crusades, in order to bird's-nest foreign tongues. The blacksmith makes him a chastity belt to protect his wife's virtue, which has a sexomorphic hole at its centre large enough for all reasonable needs. The hero refuses it, until he sees that a carrot introduced into the hole is sliced in half by a hidden mechanism. When he returns from the wars he lines up his knights and pages, orders them to drop their trousers, and sees that all but one have lost their gentlemanly parts. The exception is his old friend Lancelot, whom he congratulates enthusiastically. But Lancelot cannot find a word to reply, the pussy having got his tongue for ever.

> The particular interest of this myth [our authors point out] is that it is based on the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

antagonism of iron and carrots, hence metal and vegetables. . . . It is a fact admitted by the *14A* tribe that "in so far as the customs of a people become chaste, their tongue becomes corrupted."

True or false? We can at least agree with the savages of the *14A* tribe that savants are not *really* funny when they are taken seriously. For how is it that Lévi-Strauss can look at myths loaded with similar grossness without the least change of expression? Farts, subterranean penises a mile long, opossums copulating through the nose and sneezing their young into the pouch, endlessly menstruating young girls, vultures eating a boy's buttocks which are later repaired with a vegetable paste, or the tale of the ithyphallic hero swarming up a tree which his desire has turned into a greasy pole—all these matters he deals with in *Le Cru et le Cuit* with a poker face suitable either for a church or a clinic. There is surely something preposterous about Structuralism if it ignores the relish with which these topics are listened to in the jungle, or what primitive Jorns are at work busily mocking the sacred with its own dirt.

A sense of proportion Lévi-Strauss has, almost to excess; a sense of humour, hardly. The graces he allows to filter through the sieve of his permutations come at the expense of a joke that has to laugh at itself, no matter how seriously it is also engaged in constructing social systems and ritual forms, and which has all the energy and information at its immediate disposal that Lévi-Strauss has to modulate so finely into his explications. It is a monster of a joke, and one should be grateful to Jorn and Arnaud for tickling its belly for us.

And yet—the spasms which pass through its anatomy when they do so are not as memorable as they should be, and the extravagance of their behaviour often defeats itself. It is not only that their tone of voice is deplorable, which one expects, or that their marmyths lack that tone of finality possessed by myths proper, which perhaps cannot be helped. It is rather that by itself the anti-culinary experience, whether created by 'pataphysics or vandalism,[7] has a trajectory too short to pass unaided through three hundred pages, and that one tires of this hunt after the structuralist White Whale with rubber spears. I had thought, on first opening *La Langue Verte*, that here was the perfect antidote to Lévi-Strauss and his semantic Buddhism. But in spite of all their good jokes, in the end it is Lévi-Strauss who turns out to be the only antidote to Jorn and Arnaud.

[7] Jorn is the Director of the Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism. The term "Vandalism" here has a positive meaning, and the Institute has published a number of serious books.

Open your mind to a new idea

A New History of the United States
William Miller **12s**

Bomb Culture
Jeff Nuttall **8s**

Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art
Erwin Panofsky **15s**

The Pursuit of the Millennium
Norman Cohn **15s**

The Politics of Ecstasy
Timothy Leary **10s**

The War of the Flea
Robert Taber **7s**

Crime and Personality
H. J. Eysenck **10s**

The War Business
George Thayer **10s**

Russia in Revolution
Lionel Kochan **15s**

Love and Death in the American Novel
Leslie A. Fiedler **15s**

Homo Ludens
Johan Huizinga **12s**

On the Track of Unknown Animals
Bernard Heuvelmans **12s**

PALADIN

a new idea in paperbacks

Granada Publishing

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Troubled Reflections of a TV Journalist

By Robin Day

SO SWIFT AND DRAMATIC has been television's growth that the full consequences of its impact on human life and affairs are not yet clearly discernible. The speed of its development, social and technological, has been fantastic. It has spread to the poor countries of the third world. In affluent societies it is in almost every home. Satellites orbiting in space transmit events in one part of this planet to another; a landing by man on the moon has been seen by man everywhere on earth. Colour television makes monochrome look as old-fashioned as radio seemed at the beginning of television.

The fifteen years which I have spent as a television journalist have coincided with the years in which television has expanded into a world phenomenon. As a journalist of the new electronic medium, I have reported events and issues in the variety of forms which television journalism has developed—newscasting; verbal reporting to camera; descriptive comment on events televised as they happen; presenting studio programmes on topical issues; making films; writing commentary for film reports and documentaries; and interviewing—this being a function which in British television has been developed into a new instrument of journalistic enquiry and a controversial feature of the political scene.

None of this makes one better qualified than any other citizen to pass opinion or moral judgment about television's effect on society. But professional involvement in the television coverage of events during the last decade and a half enables me to illustrate the difficulties and dangers of television as a journalistic medium and to suggest how these may be overcome.

TELEVISION JOURNALISTS (editors, producers, reporters) find that in trying to make the best use of their potent medium, they have to grapple with the extremely challenging limitations which affect television as a medium of journalistic communication. These limitations are of two kinds: imposed and inherent—those which arise from the system under which television is allowed to operate, and those which arise from the very nature of the medium itself.

The imposed limitations are the most obvious —control, interference and pressure from governments and politicians; and control, interference and pressure from commercial interests, *i.e.*, advertisers, who may be involved in certain television systems. The dangers of these pressures are greatly increasing. As the technology of television (videotape, satellites, colour) develops, television is becoming more and more expensive. That means that those responsible for television, especially on the journalistic side, become more and more dependent on either politicians or commercial interests for their money.

The degree to which television suffers from control and pressure is, of course, a reflection of the society in which it operates. Television is simply an instrument of communication, which can be used for good or evil. Arsenic can be used as a weed-killer or as a wife-killer. So can television be used as an instrument of tyranny and propaganda, or as an instrument of democratic liberties and critical discussion. Even under a free democratic system, such as in Britain, television has imposed on it a fundamental limitation—the duty to be impartial and accurate in its coverage of news and events. That duty means that an impartial television service (unlike the press) cannot propagandise its own opinions. It must, broadly speaking, present "both sides" of every question. This principle is not always easy to apply in practice, especially when a question has more than two sides, or when a question has, in the overwhelming opinion of the moment, only one side.

ROBIN DAY *regularly introduces "Panorama," the BBC's leading public affairs programme; he has been with BBC TV for ten years. Born in 1923, he studied law at Oxford and was President of the Oxford Union in 1950. He was called to the Bar in 1952 and practised for a short time. His television career began in 1955 as a newscaster and political reporter with Independent Television News, the news service of the British commercial network. He has specialised as a political interviewer and as a film reporter and producer.*

Day has published a book on "Television: A Personal Report" (Hutchinson, 1961)—describing the new electronic journalism; and "The Case for Televising Parliament" (Hansard Society).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SO IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY where the TV services are enjoined to be impartial, the television journalist is basically confined to two functions: (1) reporting, investigating and analysing facts, and (2) presenting and examining the opinions of others.

Though he is denied the right to propagate his own opinions he still has (or should have) one of the ancient weapons of journalism in his hands: the right to ask questions, the right to probe and enquire. He is not, as campaigning newspaper men sometimes suggest, a "castrated journalist." Television need not become a handy instrument of mass hypnosis for politicians and others in authority, if TV journalists use their right to enquire with vigour and persistence. The right to enquire is enhanced, not limited, by the duty of impartiality.

One reason why television may have imposed on it a duty of impartiality is that whereas you need have no limit on the number of printing presses, there are a limited number of TV channels available. In order to operate, a TV service has to be granted the right to use what is part of a scarce public asset. This is what differentiates TV (and radio) from other media —press, cinema, books, theatre—which do not (or should not) require any such permission from a Government, and do not depend on the state for their method of communication with the people.

This technical limitation on the number of TV outlets, however, may be overcome to some degree. Advances with the use of frequencies and transmission by cable are making possible a much larger number of TV output channels in a given area. This could be used, if there is sufficient wisdom and imagination to do so, to enable television to operate with a greater diversity of control, and, in areas served by only one or two newspapers, with a greater diversity of opinion than is available from the press. Where a country can develop a large number of TV stations serving local communities, there is great value in the American practice of local stations being licensed to transmit their own editorial opinions, labelled as such.

Those then are the *imposed* limitations on television, which vary from country to country according to the philosophy of Government.

THE LESS OBVIOUS and more interesting limitations are those which are inherent in the medium itself. They raise fascinating and sophisticated questions regarding the philosophy of communication.

The first *inherent* limitation of television as an influence on opinion and events is that it depends on pictures. This is not intended as a very profound or original observation—but it leads to some interesting thoughts. Human communication seems to be turning full-circle back to its primitive origins. In the dim dark ages, man communicated with man by the language of pictures and visible gesture. Then came the spoken word and the written word; later still the printed word. Five hundred years after that the broadcast word through the miracle of radio; then television, first in black-and-white, and now, increasingly, in "living colour." Admittedly the modern picture language of television can be accompanied by words. But there is no doubt that as modern communication has become more technically advanced in method it has declined in intellectual quality and rational content.

Broadcasting in sound or vision will not, I think, prove to have contributed to the advancement of ideas or the education of man as much as the printed word. Television has proved a less serious, less intelligent, medium than radio. Colour television, by emphasising the image even more vividly than monochrome, takes the backward process a stage further. The marvels of communication in the electronic age are taking us back to the primitive picture language of the stone age.

I do not wish to exaggerate this, but the fact is that television's dependence on pictures (and the most vivid pictures) makes it not only a *powerful* means of communication, but a *crude* one which tends to strike at the emotions rather than at the intellect. For TV journalism this means a dangerous and increasing concentration on action (usually violent and bloody) rather than on thought, on happenings rather than issues, on shock rather than explanation, on personalities rather than ideas.

Tales of Talking Heads

WHAT DOES THIS lead to in the practice of television journalism? It means that TV can cover a riot, a war, a revolution, an assassination, more vividly than any newspaper. It also means that television tends to give much less impressive treatment of the reasons behind those events. In the case of events or issues which do not have convenient visual existence, television tends to treat them inadequately. Take a key issue such as the political implications for Britain of signing the Treaty of Rome. This is hard to deal with on television except by what TV professionals tend to regard as a second-hand and second-class way—by people discussing it. Television men have a revealing phrase for this. They do not call it "argument" or "the exchange of ideas"; they call it "talking

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heads." In that contemptuous phrase, the image merchants of the electronic age dismiss the one characteristic of man that elevates him above the beast, the power to conceive and communicate rational thought. Man's supreme gift is seen in terms of what the eye sees on that wretched little screen: "a talking head."

Does this suggest that I am extremely cynical about my own profession, or that I am trying to unburden myself of an appalling guilt complex? All I am really trying to do is to point out some of the basic shortcomings and dangers of television so that we may seek ways of correcting or preventing them.

One way that we can prevent pictures from distorting or completely dominating television as a medium of information is by accompanying the pictures with words. This can, and should be done so as to give the pictures meaning and perspective. But words on television have their own limitation. They tend to be put into the background by the pictures, especially if these are extremely dramatic. And broadcast words cannot be re-heard as the printed word can be re-read if the reader so chooses. The vivid impact of the picture remains in the consciousness longer than the words of interpretation or qualification. The sight on a TV screen of a person being brutally injured will linger in the emotions far longer than the accompanying words, which pointed out that only one person out of a crowd of several hundred was assaulted and that the rest of the city was completely calm. It scarcely needs to be mentioned that pictures showing the rest of the city being completely calm would not rate as "good television"—another piece of professional jargon.[1]

JOURNALISTIC EVALUATION can be injected into the visual content of a television report. That is when the picture is not merely a silent picture backed by explanatory words but is a picture synchronised with speech. In that way—by a reporter's critical question, by the clash of argument—meaning and evaluation can be combined effectively with visual impact. The interpretive function is then an integral part of the visual impression. In these situations the words or expressions of an individual can have a significant and lasting impact. One simple question answered evasively or movingly or angrily can put a visual sequence into new perspective.

Some pictures need no words, no questions, no reporter. But the most vivid picture can distort the reality it appears to show unless it is combined with enquiry or explanation. Conversely, pictures can be honestly shot and dishonestly presented—with words which falsify the picture. That merely reminds us of the obvious but vital truth that the way television is used, as with any other instrument, depends in the end on the integrity and motives of those responsible for it.

The insatiable appetite of television for vivid, action-packed pictures has wide and profound implications. It means that television has a built-in tendency to present issues solely or mainly in terms of their immediately visible results. Wars on television are seen almost exclusively in terms of casualties and combat, as in the case of Viet Nam, the first television war. Or as in the Biafran rebellion, in terms of the starving children who were seen with sickening regularity on our television screens.

What is wrong with that? Is not starvation to be reported by showing the people who are starving? What *is* war but casualties and combat, blood and brutality? Fair enough—but television is liable to concentrate on these things to the exclusion of the ideas and issues which bring wars about. Television does not always take sufficient trouble to ask "who is responsible," "why is it happening," or "what is the alternative."

Nor is this all. Television may only be able to gather its pictures on one side of a conflict which may be equally horrifying in its cruelty on both sides. We have all seen some extremely brutal television pictures of the war in South Viet Nam, most of them taken with facilities provided by the Americans. But without enter-

[1] There is a fascinating piece of expert evidence as to how television can cause distortion even in the most distinguished programme, and remorse even in the most distinguished commentator. In the foreword to the book (published by John Murray) of his celebrated BBC series "Civilization," Sir Kenneth (now Lord) Clark refers regretfully to the "limitations imposed on me by the medium" and writes:

> "A line of argument determined almost entirely by visual evidence does not make for logic or completeness; and in the programmes it led to a number of omissions of which I am ashamed. Even the most rapid survey of civilisation should have said more than I have done about law and philosophy. *I could not think of any way of making them visually interesting.* [My italics.—R.D.] This defect is particularly serious in my treatment of Germany. I talk a lot about Bavarian Rococo and hardly mention Kant and Hegel. Goethe, who should have been one of the chief heroes of the series, makes only a brief appearance, and the German romantics are left out altogether. . . ."

Out went Kant and Goethe, law and philosophy! Here, on the most elevated heights yet scaled by television, is a rarefied example of the problem so often experienced on the humbler level of news-gathering.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing into discussion of the Viet Nam issue, does anyone doubt that there are brutalities and atrocities committed in the Viet Cong-held areas? How much of that has ever been seen on television?

THIS LEADS ME to another significant and rarely appreciated limitation which is inherent in television as a medium of journalism. For television to be able to cover a situation in a particular country, a number of physical requirements must be fulfilled. First, television must get in, with its elaborate equipment. That may mean a cameraman alone—but if something more serious and enquiring than crude visual journalism is intended, then it means a reporter, a sound recordist, and perhaps a producer as well. Having got in (and that is a lot less easy for a four-man television team with 20 boxes of equipment, than for a single newspaper man with one air-travel bag and a notebook) they have to be able to move about. Moving about requires capacious transport—often difficult to arrange in hostile and authoritarian countries. Moving about and setting up to film requires permission not readily granted to prying truckloads of foreigners with their paraphernalia. Even if you get the means and the permission to move about, you then have to find people who will talk. The people whom you need to talk to may insist on not being questioned or on being questioned on certain conditions. In other words television does not get *any* report unless it can actually get the pictures it needs. In many situations television does not get adequate material unless the people who should be questioned, have been questioned on film. One further little point: even if your television team does manage to do its work it still has to get its film *out*, intact and uncensored.

So one of television's *inherent* limitations is that its coverage contains a built-in bias against free and open societies. Television is far more able to give a critical and unflattering picture of a free society than of any totalitarian one.

On the television screens of the Western world (and, no doubt, of the Communist world also) pictorial reports of violence, injustice, and protest in the United States are part of the viewers' daily diet. Much of this coverage is made and marketed throughout the world by America itself. Yet how effectively is television able to cover injustice, oppression, and brutality in other parts of the world such as China, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Spain, or Rhodesia? By reason of its own operational needs television is inherently incapable of giving fair and balanced reporting of a very large part of the world today.

It is true that newspaper reporters also have difficulty in entering and reporting from authoritarian countries. But the television journalist labours under more serious operational handicaps. He cannot wander about unobtrusively, nor produce, after leaving, a brilliant "I Was There" story, as a newspaper reporter can. Newspapers can also publish analysis and interpretation based on expert study of publications and secret intelligence. Such deductive analysis is not convenient material for television.

THIS CANNOT FAIL to have a profound effect on public opinion in free countries where television is *the* mass medium of news and information. The public is constantly reminded in the most vivid way of the evils in its own society and in those other countries where television is free to prowl. But the evils of life in closed totalitarian countries cannot be given anything like the same emphasis. All of which tends to lead to a grossly distorted view of the world.

There are exceptions. One was the amazing television coverage of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. But that coverage was only possible during the brief period before censorship and police state conditions were reimposed. The television coverage of Prague was only an exception to prove the rule.

MORE THAN ANY other medium of journalism, television is a *mass* medium. There may be minority programmes, but the main output is aimed at the mass audience. All the pressures are to present programmes with the widest possible appeal. In the century of the common man, the need for mass-appeal must be accepted—but as a challenge. Mass-appeal need *not* necessarily mean total degradation of standards or cynical contempt for the audience. Television journalism has all the great opportunities and dangerous temptations of tabloid journalism. This means, of course, the mass communication of material in highly concentrated form relying on the power of pictures backed by the clearest and fewest words possible. The opportunities of this tabloid medium are to broadcast the facts, encourage informed debate, to involve the mass of ordinary people in some understanding of the events that shape their lives. Television has these opportunities in modern society in a way that has never existed since Pericles was able to address his whole community in the *polis* of Athens.

Too often these opportunities are wasted, misused, or even ignored. Sometimes television rises to the occasion with a magnificent sense of dignity and responsibility, and the maximum use of technical potential. In the terrible days of shock and horror following the assassination of President Kennedy, television helped to unite and steady a nation at a moment of appalling tragedy. Another example is of a totally dif-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ferent kind which we have seen only recently—one of the climacterics of human history—the landing of the first man on the moon.

There are many other less spectacular occasions on which television *has* nobly grasped its opportunities. But the tabloid vices of sensationalism and superficiality are television's constant temptation. Not only because of the incessant pressure to be vivid and concise but because of the technicalities of television production and presentation. This is not the place to discuss in detail how the mechanics of getting a television programme on the air tend to influence, sometimes to dominate, the content, style and treatment of that programme. The simple point is that the television journalist has to be much more conscious of his "hardware" and "logistics" than does the newspaperman or the radio reporter.

Television may be the most potent medium of mass communication the world has ever known, but because of its dangers and shortcomings those who use television as a medium of journalism are faced with a constant challenge to their integrity and sense of responsibility. These dangers and shortcomings may be summarised as follows:

It is a tabloid medium which deals in crude visual headlines.

It lives and thrives on pictures—above all on pictures of action.

It is better at conveying images and impressions than ideas and intellectual arguments.

As an investigative medium it can operate very effectively in an open democracy but much less so and often misleadingly, in an authoritarian state.

Television's proud motto is "*see it happen*," but seeing is not necessarily understanding and the sights selected to be seen may not be the whole picture.

The Irrevocable Cowardice

AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND two main questions may be examined: (*1*) What evidence is there to show how television makes its impact not only on opinion but on events? (*2*) What should be done to overcome its limitations and avoid its dangers?

Looking around the world today one can see several fascinating examples of how television has affected the course of history.

Viet Nam has been called "the first television war." There can be no doubt that the effect on Americans of seeing this war (or, rather, one side of it) in their own homes night after night had a most powerful effect on opinion. In the past, wars were something that soldiers went off to fight in remote places; today war is something that the people who stay at home have to take with their supper. On the colour screens of American homes a pool of blood is sickeningly red.

Those who take a strong view against American policy in Viet Nam will welcome the effect of television on opinion. But—detaching ourselves from the merits of the Viet Nam issue—one wonders whether in future a democracy which has uncensored television in every home will ever be able to fight a war, *however just*.

However good the cause—self-defence, resisting aggression, or even fighting under the United Nations flag—the brutal details of military action may be there on the television screen to shock and to horrify, sapping perhaps the will of that nation to resist the forces of evil or even to safeguard its own freedom.

When people are horrified by the sight of bloodshed and mutilation they are not easily convinced that a cause may be at stake. The sight of a dead child, a burning home, a dying citizen-soldier—all these may have a much more powerful impact than abstract concepts like "liberty" or "collective security."

There may be some who may ask: if television is an ally of pacifism, is that not hopeful for the world? The answer to that question must depend on whether you believe in peace at any price even if that price includes freedom or the independence of "far-away countries of which we know nothing. . . ."

The implications of this do not yet appear to be widely appreciated, but the point was grasped recently in the *Economist*:

> The United States is the first country that has ever tried to fight a televised war under the rules of democracy—free reporting, opinion polls, the lot—and if the result has been the unsurprising discovery that people loathe war that is something that all democracies will have to chew over in the future.

Americans, of course, have already begun this "chewing over," led by Vice-President Agnew with a mouthful of resentment against the way the TV networks wield their power.

Unfortunately, what validity there was in Mr. Agnew's criticisms was obscured, for several reasons: the crudity of his earlier attack on the Viet Nam dissenters; the implied threat contained in his intimidating reminder that TV stations are subject to federal licensing; his attack on the "small and unelected élite" of Eastern liberals, which was not merely directed at TV men but at the newspapers.

Nevertheless, however disturbing a politician Mr. Agnew may be, his contention that

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

television has helped to spread violence and extremist dissent intended to undermine the elected government cannot be brushed aside. Referring to television news, he protested (and are Vice-Presidents to be denied the right to protest?):

> Bad news drives out good. Concurrence can no longer compete with dissent. One minute of Eldridge Cleaver is worth ten minutes of Roy Wilkins.

The networks reacted bitterly to his attacks, but (whether due to timidity, or conscience, or to widespread public support for Mr. Agnew's criticisms) they appear to have taken note.

Attempts by Administrations to manage news and to intimidate newsmen are not new in American democracy, as is well known to those Editors who have received a phone call from President Johnson or President Kennedy, or a letter from President Truman. Television newsmen will rightly fight to maintain their independence, but they cannot be unaware that the American principle (so deeply embedded in the Constitution) that power should be distributed and subject to checks and balances, could one day be applied to the great TV networks.

IN THE WAKE OF the Agnew onslaught it is reported that Congressional investigations are to be made into certain alleged malpractices of TV journalism. Did CBS finance an attempted "invasion" of Haiti? Were demonstrators supplied with stage-prop banners for a "protest" sequence on TV? Whatever the facts in these particular cases, television's need for action pictures does create temptations which raise important questions of editorial ethics.

While there may be nothing wrong in asking someone to walk out of his front door a second time in order to get a better picture, can the same innocence be claimed if a demonstrator is asked by a cameraman to throw a brick through the window for the benefit of the 22" screen? If payment is made for the exclusive right to film an event (such as the so-called "invasion of Haiti") is that legitimate journalistic enterprise or not? Is the TV company guilty of helping to manufacture an artificial event, or can this accusation only be made if the event depends on the money paid by the TV company? If a TV documentary producer wants to film a drug party, is he guilty of "faking" or "staging" if he specially invites people to a party for the purpose of taking drugs and pays for their time and the use of the premises? Was it wrong, or praiseworthy, for a TV company to finance and film tunnelling escapes in Berlin?

Such questions have only to be posed to show the variety of ethical problems which may confront the conscientious TV newsman or documentary maker. In fairness it must be emphasised that the technicalities of television may require that arrangements (as to location, setting, participants) be made in advance and be paid for. Such arrangements do not necessarily amount to "faking" or "staging" or "financing." But the border-line is not easy to decide. Producers and cameramen are frequently tempted into staging, even creating, artificial events and situations for the convenience of the camera. Another questionable technique is reconstruction, either with genuine participants or actors, to depict an event at which the cameras could not be present. Surely such reconstruction should always be clearly labelled as such, and should always be carried out with scrupulous fidelity to fact. Even then the dangers remain. Where do you draw the line between dramatised documentary and documentary drama, between fictional realism and realistic fiction?

The main problem about all these border-line techniques of staging, creating, or reconstructing events is that even if they are used with the most scrupulously honest intentions, their use is bound to arouse suspicion when disclosed, and thereby to undermine public confidence in all television journalism, bringing it, unfairly, into general disrepute.

The use of dishonest techniques in documentary television is, I think, rare. But the nature of the medium does create special temptations. These must be sternly resisted, even at the expense of vivid or exclusive material.

THERE ARE CONFLICTING THEORIES about the effect of television violence. There are those who believe that television's continual display of *real* war and *real* violence, sandwiching that reality in between the fictional violence of gangster films and westerns, leads in time to indifference, even to a dumb acceptance of war and violence as part of the normal night's entertainment. I find such psychological speculation to be too far-fetched; I do not believe it to be true. All the evidence is that public opinion *has* been shocked and stunned by television's saturation coverage of Viet Nam, and of the war in Nigeria.

Another view is that far from encouraging an aversion for or indifference to bloodshed, television has the opposite effect. That in its portrayal of real violence—war, assassinations, violent demonstrations—television inspires imitation, and spreads violence and disruption like a deadly contagion. There is much evidence of this; but one must remember that violence and disorder existed long before the television age. The causal connection between television and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

violence is hard to prove conclusively. Nonetheless the danger cannot be ignored, and those responsible for television should work on the assumption that television *can* incite violence and that therefore the medium should be used with restraint and responsibility.

Writing about the recent impact of television in America, Theodore H. White suggests that the advent of the half-hour national news programmes in the early 1960s created a new demand by television for dramatic pictures of action and violence, not only of the Viet Nam war but of the racial conflict at home. To Mr. White this was a landmark in American history as significant as the creation of the first coast-to-coast railway a hundred years ago. The growth and drawing-power of these half-hour evening news shows depended, he says, on their pictorial presentation of violence, conflict and excitement. They whetted America's appetite for sensation. Mr. White, who is himself professionally involved in television, frankly admits a share of the responsibility, and he writes in *The Making of the President 1968:*

> ... one irrevocable cowardice binds all men in television—television dare not be dull. The logic is simple: if a television show is dull, then it loses its audience; if it loses its audience, it loses either sponsorship or executive protection; if it loses these the Producer goes broke or is removed. Whether television feeds on excitement, breeds excitement or provokes excitement is a matter of intricate debate. Whatever the answer is, there can be no doubt that television *spreads* excitement, and any producer, knowingly or not, recognises that the law of his survival requires that he speed the spread.

Mr. White's comments should be seen in their restricted context—the impact of American television, which operates under such ruthless pressures. But television's demand for sensation and violence is a natural and universal characteristic of the medium; the American system has stimulated and satisfied that demand.

THE LESSONS for other societies are clear. Television journalists must exercise their enormous responsibility with restraint and self-discipline. Under whatever system television may be financed, the dangers of seeking the maximum audience must be recognised and prevented. A system financed by advertising must be so regulated as to prevent commercial pressures from being the prevailing consideration in the minds of the programme makers. Where a publicly financed television service is in direct competition with a commercial network, the temptation to concentrate on beating them at their own game should be resisted.

Curiosity, Yellow

PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT question which lies upon a television editor's conscience is this: Does television by its very presence at an event help to create an explosive atmosphere of excitement and disorder? Does the presence of the camera automatically raise the temperature? Is television an incubator of violence? Here again history reminds us that men rose in bloody rebellion and violent demonstration long before the age of television. There is, however, abundant evidence that the television camera, with its power to communicate a single incident to millions who are not personally present, can act as an invitation to violence, to disorder, to revolutionary protest by dramatic physical action.

In situations of intolerable injustice is such reaction to be deplored? Perhaps not—but the question provokes counter-questions: Is not the increasing tendency of television to encourage protest by violence, rather than protest by peaceful persuasion, to invite the irrational rather than the rational response? Does not television have a built-in tendency to encourage the remedying of injustice by revolutionary action rather than by constitutional process? Again those are questions which you will answer according to individual philosophy. Some may feel it is good that television should be on the side of the "inevitable revolution." Others may feel there are still some problems, even in universities, which can be best solved by reasoned argument, democratic process, and peaceful change.

At this point one notices one of the confusing paradoxes of this subject. Television, which can encourage a pacifist revulsion against war, may also be an incubator of violent revolution! An explanation of this paradox is that the one is an effect on detached spectators, the other is an effect on involved participants. The new revolutionary Left will probably deny the existence of any paradox, and will say television is merely reflecting two sides of "objective truth"—that wars are the hideous product of capitalist power politics and that revolutions are a blessed release from bourgeois oppression.

THERE ARE MANY illustrations of how television does not merely "cover" or report events, but helps to *create* events, and to transform situations. One way in which television does this is by making people who have hitherto accepted certain situations aware of new forces and changing moods. Three examples may be given.

1. There is no doubt that the Negro revolution in America has been massively accelerated by television. Not merely by spreading the idea

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of violent protest, but by carrying to millions of previously apathetic people the arguments and peaceful protest of men like Martin Luther King. And by communicating to black Americans two fundamental features of White America—its enviable standard of living, and its great ideals (not always attained, but ideals nevertheless) of equal rights and democratic opportunity. These ideals are infectious, and television has helped to spread them with explosive consequences.

2. A second occasion was in Czechoslovakia during the brief period of experiment in combining socialism with freedom. I was a witness at that time to how television in Czechoslovakia had given momentum to the freedom movement. Here was a case where TV helped create a situation which led in turn to a major act of international policy, the Russian invasion. Here also was a rare and memorable instance of television being used to project and disseminate an idea. Great courage was necessary.

3. A third example has been seen recently in a corner of the United Kingdom. I refer to Northern Ireland. Here is a community which for many years has been a political backwater, suffering from the deeply entrenched prejudices of religion and communal division. The long-standing bitterness between Catholic and Protestant made it seem as if Northern Ireland were shut off from movements and ideas in the outside world. But then, gradually, into the remote inward-looking communities of Ulster came a new factor: television.

And with television, came not only quiz-games and soap opera, but startling and thought-provoking pictures of the world outside, of a world which was changing fast. A world in which Catholics and Protestants were talking of ecumenical cooperation, a world in which the very authority of the Pope was being challenged and criticised among his own flock. A world in which people who were denied reasonable human rights on grounds of religion or race were rising up to demand them. A world in which young people, especially students, were spearheading a challenge to established authority and entrenched attitudes.

This was the world which television brought with increasing impact into the lonely cottages and the shabby back-street homes of Northern Ireland. My clear impression, supported by personal observation, is that this had a fundamental effect on Northern Ireland. It opened windows on to a broader view of the world; it helped stir a challenge to blinkered bigotry and traditional intolerance; it gave impetus to the civil rights movement, and to the policy of building bridges between the two religious communities.

Having helped to change the mood in Ulster, television was then faced with a new responsibility when serious violence exploded. Would television reporting of such violence provoke even more violence by imitation or retaliation? Would television coverage of acts of violence tend to spread that violence in a country which was largely peaceful and so distort and inflame the situation? Here, in miniature, British television had a taste of the American problem for the first time.

IF ANYONE DOUBTS the power of television to enlighten and to inflame, let him look at the Republic of South Africa, where there is no television at all. Those who rule the land of *Apartheid* have no doubts whatever about the dangers of television to their philosophy. It is true that the introduction of television is now being planned—but with a care and caution which will ensure that South Africa is not polluted by any dangerous notions about racial equality and radical protest which television from the outside could so powerfully project.

I shall mention another aspect of television's impact on world events and opinion. Television tends to emphasise the personality of national leaders in a new way. President Kennedy was known to the world as no other American President before him. Both President Kennedy and President Johnson projected, by their own television images, an image of their country in themselves. Kennedy's personality had one effect—Johnson's had another. The impact of their contrasting styles and personalities as conveyed throughout the world by television may have had a significant effect on forming attitudes, mainly among ordinary people but also among governments, towards their country's policy.

Television may indeed have created a new kind of diplomacy: Diplomacy by Personality-projection and Leader-image. This "tele-diplomacy" (as it has been called) can give a national leader the opportunity of talking directly to the people of another country—even one with whom his own nation may be in bitter dispute. Governments and diplomats are by-passed. The people are addressed in their own homes and can form their own impressions.

Twelve years ago I was the first British reporter to interview President Nasser after the Suez invasion. For nearly half an hour he gave his answers—directly to the British people. A front-page headline next day ran: COLONEL NASSER DROPS IN. James Cameron described the interview as follows:

> Sitting in the garden of his Cairo home, President Nasser leaned forward into British

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> television screens. And he asked that we reunite in friendly relations. He thus did something that had never been done before in the history of international diplomacy. For the first time on record a national leader—submitting a major point of national policy—by-passed all protocol and sent his message into the homes of another state—at a time when the two were not in diplomatic relations.

Whether that interview hastened the return to normal relations I do not know, but it happened. Similar interviews are now commonplace.

WHAT CAN BE DONE to guard against the dangers which I have mentioned, and to overcome the limitations, imposed and inherent, of television as a journalistic medium?

Because the visual headlines of television can have such a powerful effect, the utmost effort should be made to ensure that the basic TV news service is presented with integrity and responsibility. The editorial values of the daily news programmes can set the tone and standard for the whole of television's journalistic output. If the basic news service succumbs to television's tabloid temptations of sensationalism, distortion, and trivialisation, if it lacks the courage and skill to tackle serious issues despite the limitations of time and technique, then a basic source of facts for an entire nation will be adulterated.

There were fears that this might happen when commercial television started in Britain. But it did not. The news service (Independent Television News), under the editorship of Sir Geoffrey Cox, established high standards of accuracy and responsibility. This meant that ITN's challenge to the BBC news was stimulating, and not degrading, as it might otherwise have been.

If the basic television news service goes "yellow" then the standards of the surrounding output are liable to be lowered and corrupted. A television news service needs to be clear and lively viewing. But making cheap impact on the viewers is, in the long run, less rewarding than winning their respect for accuracy, reliability, and fairness.

A good basic news service is essential, but not, by itself, enough. It must be supplemented by deeper programmes of analysis, comment, and enquiry. These may be in the form of film documentaries or studio discussion. Such programmes are essential if the visual headlines of the daily news are to be given meaning and perspective; this is particularly necessary where complex international issues are involved.

Even then television will be inadequate. Newspapers, periodicals, and books are not rendered unnecessary in the television age. On the contrary, they are more vital to a civilised and democratic society than ever. Television can shock, can stir consciences, can illuminate. But only the printed word can give a society its intellectual dynamic. Only the printed word can give full exercise to the critical faculty, and can provide an adequate instrument for the discussion and development of ideas.

It is true that technological advances may soon make possible the cheap mass production of recording and play-back equipment by which a viewer in his own home, at his own time, will be able to draw on a vast library of visual material—drama, history, academic lectures, scientific demonstration, technical instruction. Television viewing would not be confined to the ephemeral transmissions which an ordinary television service offers. But that is yet to come, and its importance lies more in education than in the communication of news and topical events to a mass audience.[2]

TELEVISION SHOULD BE RUN under a system which is designed to give it the maximum freedom and independence from government or commercial pressure. Needless to say, such a system is unlikely to develop in any country which is authoritarian. Nor is such a system necessarily a feature of countries which like to call themselves democratic. In de Gaulle's France, for example, television was a tool of the state.

The Vital Principle

BRITAIN has developed a very reasonable, though not perfect, system. We have two kinds of TV—public service and commercial. As a TV journalist I have worked in both.

The BBC is a public service financed by public funds—but not by direct government grant. Its income comes to the BBC from the annual licence paid by everyone who owns a television set. The BBC charter, granted periodically by Parliament, establishes it as a public (but not government-controlled) service. Though it is the Government which fixes the licence fee from which the BBC derives its income, governments do not interfere with the

[2] In many countries, radio is a more important medium of communication than either television or the press. Though lacking the permanence of the printed word, radio broadcasting is in many ways a more satisfactory medium of information and education than television. Radio has a vast potential. The safeguards I suggest for the development of television apply equally to radio.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

content of the programmes. They have been known, of course, to try (and people pick up telephones and talk to other people).

After less than fifty years' existence the BBC is regarded (abroad, at least) as one of Britain's finest achievements. Its political independence and professional standards are envied and respected as an example to broadcasters in many countries. But its independence and standards will not be upheld without constant vigilance against political pressures and the temptation to win audiences by lowering standards.[3]

On the commercial side, television in Britain is organised in a way designed to achieve the benefits, but avoid the worst abuses, of commercial advertising. There is no direct sponsoring of programmes. Advertisers buy time—as they buy space in newspapers—and have no control over programme content. Standards ultimately depend on the determination and critical concern of the Independent Television Authority, entrusted by Parliament with the power, and the duty, to ensure "quality" and "balance" in programmes.

In a television service financed by advertising there is bound to be a general pressure to make programmes with maximum audience appeal, but this may also occur under a publicly financed system, especially if it is in competition with a commercial network. What safeguard is there against this process leading to a wholesale degradation of standards? There is no safeguard, except the integrity of the programme-makers and the strength of purpose in those entrusted with ultimate responsibility.

I mention these two complementary systems as examples of how a democratic society can organise and finance television in a way which enables it to be as politically independent as possible, and which, given strong leadership, can enable it to operate with reasonable fairness and responsibility. Most visitors to Britain find that our television compares favourably with that endured by most other countries. But it has many faults and the problems of television are still in their infancy.

There is no justification for complacency. There is a continual need to resist pressures from governments and commercial interests. There is a continual need to fight for standards.

[3] A current cause of anxiety about standards arises from financial problems afflicting both sides of the British system. Contributing factors include the Government's tight-handed policy on the BBC's licence income, and the stiff Government levy imposed on ITV advertising revenue, coinciding with the expense of colorisation.

Angus Wilson

The World of Charles Dickens

A master of the novel today on the greatest English novelist of the past

Illustrated with 40 full colour plates and 150 in black and white £4 (May 26)

Christy Brown

Down All the Days

Already world-acclaimed: this superb novel of Dublin, down all the days of its sufferings and joys

30s (May 11)

Secker & Warburg

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE VITAL PRINCIPLE to uphold is that television is too important to be dominated either by politicians or by advertisers. That should be the aim in any mature democracy. The slogan for television's development should be independence, integrity, and diversity. Independence from political and commercial pressures. Integrity in those who make programmes. Diversity in the control and production of programmes.

There is in Britain one regrettable restriction. Television is forbidden to put its cameras into Parliament. In this we are behind certain European countries (such as Denmark and Sweden) and the United States, where Senate Committees (such as the Fulbright hearings on Viet Nam) are televised with important consequences on opinion and policy.

If television is to give less trivial coverage of political issues it must be able to televise the nation's prime forum of debate. And that, in Britain, is the House of Commons.

I have long campaigned for this, not in the interests of television but in the interests of Parliament. How can Parliament expect to maintain its position as the prime forum of debate if it shuts itself off from the prime medium of mass communication?

OTHER ESSENTIALS for the responsible use of television as a journalistic medium are these:

Television should not be completely in the hands of people whose main interest is light entertainment. Whatever system is devised should ensure that the information and journalistic side of television should be the direct responsibility of professionals concerned with the integrity of mass-communication, whose purpose is to inform, explain, and enquire. Otherwise informative television will be squeezed out by pressure to be sensational or "entertaining" and to avoid certain awkward or unpopular subjects.

When politicians or any public figures have access to the powerful platform of television, they should be open to questioning of a critical and challenging nature. This prevents television from becoming simply a propaganda vehicle. It also offers a way in which television can deal with ideas in a serious and illuminating way. I hear the phrase "talking head" again, but the fact is that searching political interviews have provided some of the most discussed and most controversial programmes on British television.

Probing interviews with public personalities are only one way in which television can, if it is properly run, present ideas and issues in a way which is both vivid and responsible. Film documentaries and "live" debates are among the other methods. The important thing is that they should be presented on the assumption that the public want to know, and even if they don't, have a *right* to know.

If these and the other principles I have mentioned are adhered to, television will not simply be a new "opium for the people." That danger exists if television is used simply for entertainment, as an instrument of mass hypnosis to distract attention from the real world, as a tranquilliser and a trivialiser. Where television is used as a medium of news and information, what I have urged may prevent it from becoming merely a projector of crude shock images—a nightly kaleidoscope of sensational happenings in the world.

One's attitude to television and how it should be used is bound to be an extension of the kind of society in which one believes. I happen to believe in a free society where governments can be changed, and grievances can be redressed, by persuasion, argument and constitutional process. I work in television in the belief that this fantastically potent medium can be used to strengthen that kind of society. I believe also that television's first duty is not to government, nor to any prevailing trend of opinion, whether among the masses or the influential few. Television's first duty is to the honest search for truth.

That is not a meaningless aspiration. Truth may be an elusive ideal. But there is the world of difference between a television service which is erected to *suppress* truth and one which is erected to *search* for it. To that end I want to see television not simply a gigantic image machine with one knob marked *"shock"* and the other marked TRANQUILLISE. For all its limitations it can be a mighty forum of ideas—inquiring, criticising, exposing, illuminating. Television *can* be a weapon against prejudice, injustice, and ignorance. But only if it can work in freedom, responsibility, and independence. More than three hundred years ago John Milton made his historic protest against restrictions on the liberty of printing in England, and his words could well be the finest motto a television service could have today:

"Let Truth and Falsehood Grapple; Who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?"

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Egyptian Notebook

By Paul Fussell

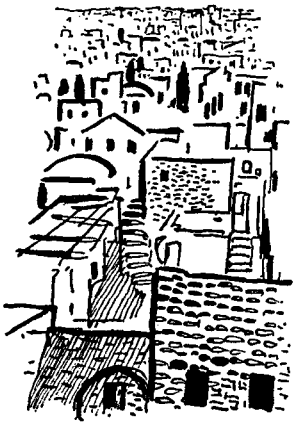
"CAIRO itself cannot properly be considered a health resort."—*Baedeker*, 1914.

THE ARABS hate the Israelis for living on land that is not their fathers'. But they hate them even more because they come from Warsaw and New York and Berlin and Vienna and Dresden. They are "Europeans" set down among "natives." They are engineers, doctors —educated people. They have the advantage. The Jewish presence easily assumes the shape of the old scenario: sophisticated foreign interference with local prerogative.

"FIRST it was the Persians. Then the Greeks and Romans. Then the Turks. Then the French and English. Now the Russians."

INSTEAD of tourists in the hotels, delegations and trade missions: Italian, East European, Chinese, Soviet. Downtown, the travel agencies are like tombs—no reason even to turn the lights on. Hoardings: *"Visit Beautiful Leipzig." "Come to the Polish Trade Fair."* No one will do either.

The innumerable Soviet delegations receive second-class treatment: meals, lodging, amenities. Accustomed to third-class treatment, they are thrilled.



On the Botanic (formerly "Kitchener's") Island, Aswan: a constrained crowd of fifty Soviet visitors. Workers dressed up like Kulaks. Black suits, no ties, black caps, fierce fedoras worn square on the head. Little badges on the lapels. A touching clumsiness.

"Are the Russians popular here?"

"No. They never buy jewellery, only shoes."

ASWAN. Magic sunlight and peace. The Cataract Palace, once full of British phthisics, is deserted and beautiful. The birdsong becomes its own kind of quiet, and if you listen carefully you can hear the shriek of the jet engines being tested for the gift Soviet fighter-bombers. The work proceeds leisurely: is the point to test and test and never have to install and operate?

SINCE ANTIQUITY, kenning and euphemism have been Egyptian talents. Hence the difficulty of translating hieroglyphics literally. Today one hears not of the defeat but of "1967"; not of the war, but of "The Troubles."

SIGN at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo: *"The Museum is partially closed because of the actual circumstances."*

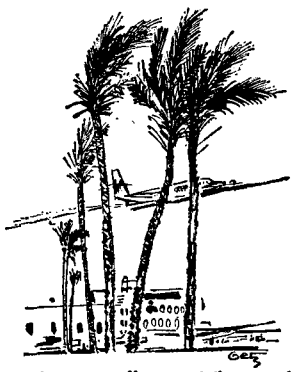
THE CAIRO PLANE is six hours late getting to Luxor. Talk of "weather" and "clouds." Later I learn that Israeli planes have been strafing with impunity near the Cairo airport.

Another time, numerous impudent air sorties within five miles of Cairo. No Egyptian planes leave the ground. I find out about the raids from a brilliant, waggish fellow in the government. Next day, the *Egyptian Gazette* says nothing, but writes instead: "Delegations from the German Democratic Republic, India, Bulgaria, and Rumania are due to arrive in Cairo this and next month for economic and industrial talks with UAR officials."

Is there a war on? In the museum nothing has been put away. The things might easily be hidden where they came from, the deep tombs at Thebes, the underground mastabas at Saqqara; instead, the glass cases have been criss-crossed with strips of paper tape. Around the more precious exhibits, low walls of leaky sandbags. The guards solicit tips and cigarettes.

EVEN in antiquity the Egyptians, for all the exhibitionism of their monuments, were a thrifty people: they kept the construction causeways at Giza after the stones had been dragged up and turned them into ramps for ceremonial processions. The sandbags in the museum are

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Marshall Plan grain sacks. Each one reads, *"Donated by the People of the United States."*

According to law, entrances to buildings must be protected by seven-foot brick blast walls. Many are *en principe* only, foot-high rows of ageing sandbags. The pedestrians step around them without looking.

The El Tahrir Bridge is guarded day and night by sentries. I am sure their Soviet submachine-guns are not loaded.

Is EGYPTIAN "Civil Defence" only archaic, or is it totemistic as well? Headlights are painted blue. Any emblem of efficiency will do, no matter how ridiculous. The Aswan Dams are protected by miniature barrage balloons which are always on the ground.

Sometimes Egyptian soldiers take one back to the Second World War, more often to the First. Those who have complete uniforms wear wrap puttees and carry unloaded Lee-Enfields.

THE FIRST of the day-time air-raid drills in Cairo. At noon the sirens go off. Everyone—shopkeepers, fellahin from the alleys, schoolchildren—comes out to look instead of "taking shelter" (where?). Frantic dramaturgic shouting by M.P.s and police. Chaos, and on the very day an important Soviet delegation is driving through town on its way to the Pyramids.

Blackout drill at ten that night. Someone either hysterical or embittered pulls the main switch at Shepheard's Hotel, stopping all the elevators between floors and unthawing the *vitello marsala congelée*.

"What are those children's clothes that look like pajamas?"

"Pajamas."

"What do you call them here?"

"Pajamas."

"IF IT hadn't been for Nasser, 1967 would have been not just a disaster but a real catastrophe."

"WHAT do you do?" I am asked.

"I'm a teacher."

"Ah! What do you teach?"

"Literature."

"What?"

"Literature."

"What is that?"

I have had the same conversation in rural Turkey. What would they say if I told them that I teach Literary Criticism?

POPULATION. Less an explosion than a persistent, irreparable leakage. On every yard of irrigated land, people. In the streets and parks and alleys of Cairo, people, people, people. Birth-control propaganda clearly futile. One man praises me for having only two children and confesses to six himself. "Too many." He is a Copt and an engineer and well-educated and he drinks too much, but he is an Egyptian.

With not half enough jobs to go round, everyone has to have a "deal" in addition to his official work. Currency is especially popular. Hashish can be had.

I keep an appointment with a professional man—he wears a European suit—at his ground-floor office. I find him out on the sidewalk praying on a small rug. I wait with my back turned until he is finished. I think we both feel like fools, but I'm not sure.

"What happened to the columns of that temple?"

"Mr. ——— used the stones for his sugar-cane factory."

AT A HOTEL in Luxor is a boy no more than ten whose job, which he performs with extraordinary love and discipline, is to stand at the door of the restaurant and bow ever so slightly as the diners pass. This occupies him for five hours every day. The elevators are automatic, but each has an "attendant" to push the buttons for you. Each bit of luggage finds its carrier. I receive many offers to clean, or perhaps shine, my tennis shoes. Changing for a swim, I am assisted by two helpers who first receive and then hang up my articles of clothing one by one. They both hold my trunks open while I step in.

I MAKE an appointment with a disaffected person to "talk" late at night. When we meet, he has had time to think about what he's doing, and terror and shame overtake him. Politely, he says that he can tell me nothing.

AT LUXOR a plane's landing gear collapses. At Abu Simbel the Italian-made hydrofoil breaks down with a great stink of diesel oil. The fluorescent tubes

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have a permanent flicker. My learned, sophisticated dragoman who takes his morning crap on the street in front of me is a wise man: why wrestle with a fractious water closet?

In two weeks, only two hostile acts. Near the Great Pyramid a little girl throws large stones at my back. Two hit me. On the street in Luxor, a man sitting on the sidewalk performs an elaborately noisy spitting act as I pass. It is very dark. Does he think I am English? American? Russian? I have no way of knowing.

On the west bank of the Nile at Thebes a man points to an archaic steam locomotive hauling a string of cars loaded with sugar-cane.

"There's an antiquity for you."

A truck carrying a seven-man work crew stops in the middle of the street at the evening rush hour. Everybody honks. One man climbs slowly down from the truck and solemnly takes a picture of the rest. They are proud of their truck.

At the museum I am ravished by an unexpected statuette of the Pharoah Mycerinus. He is stepping forward, gently urged by the goddess Hathor and a girl personifying one of the forty ancient counties. They are all smiling. His reign, marked by unusual beneficence, followed the rigours of Cheops' and Chephren's, and he built the last and the smallest of the three Giza pyramids. The labourers on his pyramid liked to work for him, and one of the crews gave itself the name "Mycerinus is drunk."

Nice guys finish last.

LETTERS

Whose Spillover Enemy?

I have just finished reading Edward J. Mishan's "The Spillover Enemy" in the December issue of Encounter with feelings that progressed from complacent approval to baffled wonder and on to violent alarm.

I reached for Encounter on this particular evening to find relief from a dinner in a popular Winnipeg restaurant where I was served a hot-house-grown and utterly tasteless lettuce brought to Winnipeg by one of those "twenty-ton trucks hurtling through the night" (in our case) from South to North. The lettuce was concealed beneath a mound of synthetic paste undoubtedly brought in in large jars from the East. It was followed by a desiccated, tasteless, battery-produced turkey imported from the West, smothered in synthetic gravy made of chemicals produced in the stream-polluting factories of the East. If there ever was a case for a "disutility tax" here it was. And yet my Alberta-born host who took me to the place was smacking his lips in evident pleasure, saying one can always be sure of getting splendid food in this restaurant. His view was obviously shared by a throng of customers who filled the dining room and ate the frightful concoctions with relish. Indeed, the same concoctions unloaded from the same trucks were at that evening served in about a hundred other Winnipeg restaurants to large numbers of equally appreciative Winnipeg diners.

It was next-to-impossible to find parking space but when the dinner was over even I, who hate motor-cars, was glad to be able to slip into a warm car rather than wait for public transport in a temperature of 44 degrees of frost with a 19 m.p.h. north wind howling straight down from the North Pole.

Last summer I spent my holidays on Capri and in Naples. Day and night noisy planes were unloading hordes of tourists who rushed through the beautiful landscape, clutching their mineral water in which to brush their teeth, 30 minutes in the National Museum, 90 minutes in Pompeii, half an hour in Capri and 20 minutes on Anacapri where they were carried in buses that emitted clouds of petrol fumes polluting the lovely air. I spoke to some of the tourists and they were all having a "wonderful time."

Naples is one noisy, stinking traffic jam, and if the cars ever had silencers they had been ruthlessly removed. The more noise you make the more virility you exhibit. In the slums, where one can see an entire family assembled in the front parlour doing piece-work, there is a little car outside each house, and when work is over the family gets into it aimlessly driving around the city making noise and polluting the atmosphere. They love it.

Twenty years ago I was rowed by two fishermen to the grotto near Amalfi. It was a Saturday and the fishermen were saying happily: "Tomorrow is

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sunday, there will be *pasta* for dinner." "What kind of meat?" I asked. "Meat?" they answered puzzled. "But it's not a *festa* to eat meat."

Today the fishermen take you to the grotto in a smelly, noisy motor-boat, the grotto is full of plastic embellishments, load after load of tourists are decanted outside it from unwieldy unpleasant buses that make it impossible to walk quietly to Ravello. But the fishermen now eat *pasta* every day and probably also one of those battery-hatched chickens, first cousins of that impossible turkey I forced myself to swallow earlier tonight.

"Perhaps you liked it better in the old days," said a shopkeeper on Anacapri who had returned home after 20 years in Latin America, and who told me that there was only one cobbler left in the village to repair my shoe. "But to us this is progress," the word meaning a shiny little car outside each goat-shed.

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV, on his visit to America, looked at the traffic jams and the car fumes and said decisively that nothing like that would be allowed in the Soviet Union. And today Russia is an unpopulated "green and pleasant land" where the people have nothing but public transport, no noise to suffer from, no hordes of tourists to disfigure the countryside.

Ask any Russian what he would like best. Not freedom to speak his mind, not freedom to read Pasternak or Sinyavsky; no, what he dreams of is a little car of his own. And if he knew, he would probably like to be able to get on one of those noisy jumbo jets and do a three-week rush tour round the world. The Czech refugees who came to Canada after August 1968 all bought cars long before they had enough money to buy clothes, or household dishes, or homes. And like the rest of us, when they get bored watching television they get into their cars and aimlessly drive around the city.

What Mr. Mishan wants to do is to impose his—and my—standards upon the multitudes which thoroughly enjoy the "disutilities." If people wish to enjoy themselves, in their large majorities, that is their right if freedom is to mean anything. And if they use up the earth's natural supply of oxygen in the process, well that is the look-out of our descendants. There has been too much misery inflicted upon humanity in the name of posterity, and I for one suspect any intellectual who knows what is best for my children's welfare. If Mr. Mishan desires clean air and a noiseless empty land, there is always space on the Prairies. He will be heartily welcome provided he can put up with −40 degrees Fahrenheit and that synthetic gravy.

F. S. MANOR

Winnipeg Free Press,
Winnipeg, Canada

I FIND Mr. Manor's descriptions entertaining and, alas, only too recognisable. But his dismay at what I wrote would be understandable only if I had, at any point in my article, proposed to impose my views on the multitude. Not that I have any faith in the ultimate wisdom of majorities to prescribe for themselves a better world. Sucked into the vortex of modern life, itself a by-product of a burgeoning technology, subjected to unlimited commercial propaganda and endless commentary, the ordinary man is fast approaching a state of moral disintegration; his instincts warped, his vision blurred, his judgment capricious, his wants ephemeral, his foresight non-existent.

But rather than descant with apparent relish on the follies of ordinary men, as does Mr. Manor, and then later, in a magnificent outburst of democratic assertion, relegate anyone aspiring to better things to cold prairies and synthetic gravy, I more discreetly imposed on myself a self-denying ordinance. I proposed, in fact, to argue that *within* the existing framework of economics, and *within* the existing parliamentary system, substantial social improvements *were* possible. Thus, taking as data the existing distribution of income, the existing technology, and the *existing pattern of tastes*, I undertook to demonstrate that, on strictly economic premises, we were producing too much of a large number of spillover-creating products.

I may, of course, have failed to convince some readers of the validity of my arguments. But since I nowhere depicted the issue as one of the Connoisseur of Life *versus* the Philistine Horde, nor anywhere sought to persuade readers that my superior taste should prevail over inferior taste, Mr. Manor's "violent alarm" is entirely of his own making—of his own reading, that is, but *not* of my writing.

If he troubles to look through the article again—and, if I may respectfully suggest it, in circumstances less distracting than those he met with in his "popular Winnipeg restaurant"—he will discover that, contrary to his assertion, my arguments would *not* justify a "disutility tax" on his synthetic gravy. His evident disgust at the idea of himself and others ingesting this compound of chemicals does not qualify, on the liberal scheme of things, as a valid spillover effect. In contrast, the more tangible disutilities thrown on to the public by motorised vehicles are regarded, on that scheme, as spillovers, and in a proper economic calculus are to be entered as social costs. Since, in fact, they are not entered into the costs of producing or operating such vehicles, the demand for them, I surmised, is far in excess of the "optimal" number than that which can be justified on economic arguments.

IT MAY HELP HIM, and others, however, if I briefly cast the argument of my paper into a somewhat different mould. Once technology starts producing goods that have significant ill-effects on the welfare of the public at large, a well-functioning market becomes less dependable a mechanism for expanding choice. For although the good confers benefits on the buyer himself, its production and/or its operation simultaneously reduces the range of (free) goods enjoyed by other members of society. And this obviously poses a problem. For if Mr. Manor happens to dislike private cars, and prefers public transport, all he can do within the existing system is not to buy a car. Yet, given that he can do nothing at all about everyone else's car, he may as well choose the car rather than forgo entirely the limited convenience it has within the environment that has built up around him. Everyone else may

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also feel the same way as Mr. Manor, and so the market in private cars continues to flourish. Similarly, Mr. Manor may dislike aircraft noise. But all he can do now is to refrain from air travel. And since his sacrifice makes a negligible contribution to reducing aircraft noise, he may just as well avail himself of any convenience it offers him. Others may think like him, and, in their helplessness, take what limited choice the market offers.

However, along with any number of other people, if Mr. Manor were now given the choice either (*a*) of having his own car in a traffic-bound environment, or (*b*) of ditching his car and living along with others in a quiet non-motorised environment, he might well choose the latter. Again, if offered the choice (*a*) of travelling whenever he wishes by airline, and putting up with the noise or (*b*) not so travelling, but having a permanent guarantee of quiet skies, he might well opt for (*b*).

But the market, at least under existing institutions, simply does *not* offer people these crucial choices. So how can we tell what people really want?

Even if only a minority of people preferred the (*b*) options, it is economically, and technically, entirely feasible to set aside for them viable amenity areas; and this without prejudice to the majority which could continue to live in a state of bliss—as Mr. Manor is convinced they do—amid clamour, pollution, and garbage.

We may conclude, tentatively, that where technological development is such that market mechanisms have the incidental effect of robbing us of vital choices, political mechanisms can be invoked to restore them to us.

EDWARD J. MISHAN

London School of Economics

"The Death of the Past"

THANK YOU very much indeed for *R*'s wise and perceptive review of *The Death of the Past* [ENCOUNTER, March]. There ought really to be two endings—one elegiac and pessimistic, which would express what I feel perhaps forty-five per cent of the time, and the other, which is printed, which represents the hope that I cling to for the rest. But of the weakening hold of the past on present society, I have no doubt.

J. H. PLUMB

Christ's College,
Cambridge

"Who Killed The Student Revolution?"

THE COMING WITHDRAWAL from Viet Nam and the shrinking role of white students in the civil rights movement are the two causes offered by Robert Nisbet for "the death of the Student Revolution" [ENCOUNTER, February]. In neither case does Professor Nisbet suggest that the white radicals are truly satisfied with the developing situation, and surely no one in "the Movement" thinks America any less "imperialist" or "racist" under Nixon than it was under Johnson. In other words, the radical students have turned away from politics not because they find conditions improving, but for precisely the opposite reason. They indulge in what David Riesman has called "extravagant despair." Riesman (writing in the October 1969 ENCOUNTER) noted that this feeling of utter hopelessness "can lead some to withdraw from political and cultural action while others feel justified in acts of destructiveness," and this dichotomy accurately describes the student movement today.

The election of President Nixon is, I would argue, the prime factor in producing this "extravagant despair." Under Nixon, it was predicted long before the inauguration, the Student Left would feel ignored in a way that no Democrat would ever ignore it. It would feel that Nixon could not be moved by demonstrations, teach-ins, "guerrilla theatre," or any other form of public protest. This prediction has been proved accurate. This feeling of impotence or of alienation from the centres of power is not, however, experienced only by student radicals. There is no doubt that all groups to the left of centre in American politics now find it more difficult to affect the policy decisions coming from the White House than was the case under the Johnson Administration.

There remains a missing link in the chain which connects the Nixon election to the death of the student movement, however. An old American expression holds that "when the going gets tough, the tough get going," and indeed, under Nixon as under Eisenhower, one has yet to read of the dissolution of the NAACP, the B'nai-Brith, or the AFL-CIO. These groups represent, and fight for, certain interests and goals; and while they undoubtedly saw Nixon's election as a setback, it is unlikely that any considered simply throwing in the towel. Their goals remain, unchanged; and if tactics need be shifted or target dates delayed, nevertheless in a time of adversity one rallies to the cause and fights on.

THE POINT IS (and Professor Nisbet stated it well) that the student movement did *not* react this way because it was never really motivated by a cause. The goal was more "to be entertained, to be stimulated, above all, to be listened to. . . ." The student movement (and I watched it for four years at Harvard) "was not a revolt that arose from any clear interest-orientation of students," and thus when it was no longer fun, it was over.

In retrospect it is ironic that so many student politicos used to claim that only they "truly

Manchester

TARIQ ALI, *the student leader, yesterday admitted he was fighting for a lost cause. He said the students' revolt had collapsed in ruins.*

He told 200 students at Manchester University: "We have missed the boat. We have made a lot of noise but have not achieved much."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cared" about poor or black Americans, or Vietnamese peasants. Middle-class students, it should be clear by now, are the most fickle of all groups on the political stage. When they are no longer amused, they retire from the scene; and in this sense it is no accident that so many students found a man to admire in Eugene McCarthy.

Though the student movement is dead, the adolescent desire to be entertained and stimulated (which Professor Nisbet indicated fueled it) remains alive. If anything this has grown, for having been so well entertained by the movement, students are now sorely in need of a replacement for it. It is not surprising that in many cases the replacement appears to be drugs. The middle-class student of whom Professor Nisbet wrote is not and will not become a drug addict, nor a habitual user of *LSD*; marijuana and hashish remain the most popular drugs. These "soft drugs" serve precisely the same function for many students that the Movement did, and are what I would call a "safe rebellion."

The safe rebellion must amuse and occupy the student for long periods of time; yet, on the other hand, the time element must be easily regulated so that the rebellion not interfere with studies, or exams, or holidays. It must be considered an immoral or illegal or otherwise repugnant form of behaviour by society—yet must in fact be infrequently punished. It must be an activity of which one's parents do not wholly approve (or it would not qualify as real rebellion)—yet one which they will abide or which can be hidden from them, so as not to interefere with their continued supply of love and money. It should be apparent that both drugs and politics are admirably suited to these conditions. I would add that drugs provide one additional benefit. They are more easily subject to individual as opposed to group control, since a "high" (unlike a demonstration) can be had whenever anyone is in the mood.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT, in any case, is dead. That students feel little loss if they can replace the gratifications received from the movement with those of drugs, does not change the effects on society. As in the 1950s, a student generation may rest uninvolved with political and social problems, absorbed instead in a private world of material and psychological satisfactions. It will be ironic indeed if (in the phrase of Harvard student leader Steven Kelman) the student movement which set out to change the world produces in the end nothing more than a "turned-on silent generation."

ELLIOTT ABRAMS

London

ROBERT NISBET, analysing the death of the student revolution in the United States, reduces away enough of the complexities to

> *level down the truth*
> *To certain general notions for the sake*
> *Of being understood at once.*
>
> (WORDSWORTH, *The Prelude*)

And though Mr. Nisbet's analysis is "understood" it is just a bit too facile and finished. His forthrightness is appreciated ("I have had little relish for the revolution from the start"); but journalistic honesty is at the same time not a licence to don blinders and simply trot a blind path. What is disturbing is the pastiching together of occasional insightful observations into a coherent but simply misleading and inaccurate conclusion.

That a revolutionary movement cannot be sustained by an overweened middle-class youth; that their motivations have not—like the American Black—an intense relation between concrete goals and interest roots, may be somewhat true. But that is a rather frail basis on which to argue a complex issue. To deny an awareness and to disregard legitimate motivation against just those middle-class values which Mr. Nisbet himself denigrates, "the guilt-tinged and boredom producing" ones, is to deny these students any ability to *perceive* their social environment and the ills which shroud that environment. It is paradoxically denying the influence of the universities themselves which, through the coursework it offers, works to sharpen those perceptions.

Not many people—except Mr. Nisbet (and very vehemently)—will argue that the student revolution has not been about student reform. It has been a by-product. The student revolution has been bent on awakening: not just other students, not just the professors and university administrations, but the Moms and Dads who had forgotten that they had the right to dissent, that they could take back their proxy from a government that, over the years, had become careless, self-confident, and smug—Viet Nam, the most visible and damning example.

Deflation of the student movement cannot be attributed to President Nixon's "deeply committed, irreversible, objective" to get clear of Viet Nam (it might be more accurate to talk about the effect of the President's closed ear to dissent); nor can it be packaged into a neat sociological explanation that lumps people into class origins, and accounts for their actions, according to those origins.

If the 1970s is going to see a "vogue" for social analysts such as Mr. Nisbet, we may indeed have to go back to the "intellectual fashionables," McLuhan and Marcuse.

MERRILL LEFFLER

St. Catherine's College
University of Maryland

I AM INDEBTED to Mr. Elliot Abrams for his perceptive remarks. They both widen and deepen my own analysis in several places. He is, believe me, absolutely right on, first, the crucial difference between the Nixon and the Johnson administrations so far as the political Left is concerned and, second, the substantially greater incidence of use of narcotics (to which he could have added use of "sensitivity" relationships in their now myriad forms). Both are, from my point of view, manifestations of the suicidal impulse I referred to.

Mr. Leffler's objections interest but do not wholly clarify my mind. I happen to prefer Blake to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

London

DRASTIC ACTION *has been taken by Mr. Laurie Lee, the female impersonator. Because of constant confusion with Mr. Laurie Lee, the poet and author of "I Walked Out One Summer Morning," the theatrical Mr. Lee is changing the spelling of his first name to Lorri.*

His manager, Mr. Ron Ellis, rang me with the news. "It's been going on for three years," he said. "Such confusion as you'd never believe."

Mr. Lee, the impersonator, had "gone ex-directory," in spite of the risk of losing engagements thereby. But his telephone number was still advertised in "The Stage," and people persisted in ringing him up with invitations to deliver lectures on literary subjects.

The other Mr. Lee (author of "Cider with Rosie") whose number is in the book, said: "I get rung up at two o'clock in the morning by people who say: 'Can you do a show tomorrow at the Bull and Bush?'

"One of these days I'll say yes and go along. But as my technique's a bit rusty, I'd probably ruin his reputation."

EVENING STANDARD

Salisbury

THE RHODESIAN CENSORS *have asked to see the "Othello" film Laurence Olivier made in 1966 and which the Rainbow cinema, Salisbury, intends to screen soon. Having a black Moor wed to a white Venetian could cause embarrassments hereabouts, perhaps, but having our censors ban "Othello" would surely cause more. Think of the heyday the overseas press would have.*

Still when you know it is really Olivier in black make-up who is getting cosy with Maggie Smith, it is not quite the same as seeing someone with a genuine black skin doing likewise.

THE RHODESIAN HERALD

Chicago

DURING *90 minutes in the courtroom, Mr. Norman Mailer did manage to get in a few colourful passages about what he saw in Chicago in the "rare blue twilight" of August 28, 1968. He described the police cutting through the ranks of the demonstrators "like sheets of rain, like a sword cutting off grass."*

Judge Hoffman commented: "You're too high-priced a writer to give us all that detail for free. Just answer the question." A defence lawyer explained: "He's never been very strong on dialogue."

THE TIMES

WHEN A MORAL SENSE *is present [according to Professor J. W. N. Watkins] it may be all too amenable to ideological exploitation. I do not know when it was first discovered that the best way to get men to do wicked things is to tell them that they have a higher duty to do them. Julien Benda, in his "La Trahison des Clercs," claimed that it was only quite recently that "clercs" began to engage at all systematically in "the intellectual organisation of political hatreds." Moral beliefs can be dangerous things, especially when twisted or corrupted by some factitious ideology.*

But the only cure for bad moral beliefs is better ones. For my part, I think that the main intellectual danger at the present time is neo-Hegelian double-think. There is nothing like a dialectical equation—"tolerance = repression," "democracy = totalitarianism," "schizophrenia = true sanity," "bourgeois rationalism = irrationalism"—for inducing moral stupidity When the process is intensified by drugs we are liable (as we now hear) to get "killing = liberation."

I believe that philosophy can help a little here—not by preaching "sound" moral doctrines, but by helping to create a critical and unsolemn intellectual climate in which neither the higher nonsense nor the lower nonsense has a good chance of survival.

INAUGURAL LECTURE, *London School of Economics*

Hastings

DEAR *old "Myra Breckinridge" isn't the only trembling victim of our so-called "permissive" society.*

I've just had an innocent little virgin of a book published, "Tell It The Way It Is," being a sort of Primer for Christian Communicators, in which I despairingly described certain plays as "sophisticated fornication" or "farce about tits and bums and clergymen who've mislaid their trousers under the French maid's bed."

And now I'm told that a big London religious bookshop is declining to stock it because of (and, so help me, I quote!) its "four-letter words"!—Yours, the corrupter of Christians, G. W. Target.

THE GUARDIAN

London

MICK JAGGER, *of the Rolling Stones pop group, was fined £200 with 50 guineas costs at Marlborough Street Magistrates' Court yesterday for possessing cannabis resin.*

In his evidence Mr. Jagger had denied shouting: "Marianne, Marianne, don't open the door. It is the law; they are after the weed."

He said: "I would not have been able to shout because someone had a hand over my mouth. I would not use the word 'weed' anyway; it is an archaic word."

THE TIMES

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wordsworth and will admit cheerfully that God lives in the details, not the generalisations, and doubtless not even God could forgive me for the details I omitted in my article. But Mr. Leffler appears to miss not the details but rather certain generalisations that he had, I would judge, already reached. And these are not clear to me. Is he implying at the end of his letter that organised power in this country, including his country's campuses, is *not* greater and more readily mobilisable than it was in 1960? I wish he were right. He is wrong. Is he suggesting that there were other significant consequences of the student revolution—or, as I prefer to call it, insurrection—than the nearly total collapse of the Student Left, its retreat to narcotic, communitarian, and other forms of suicidal behaviour, and the extraordinary expansion of administrative, political, and police power? If so, what are they? Not, certainly, any revitalisation of the Left, student or other. And not, even more certainly, any revitalisation of the university; not even any piecemeal reforms that can be attributed to the five years of vandalism.

Perhaps he is saying that in every crime the nature and behaviour of the victim are as vital to understanding as are the nature and behaviour of the criminal. If so, I honour him, and agree. My forthcoming book on *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma* will seek to account *in detail* for the fact that a tiny handful of vandals and a somewhat larger number of misguided student and faculty idealists were able to dominate the American university for nearly a decade. For the present I am obliged to leave it at that. It is not, however, a eulogy to the American university as it existed from the Second World War on. Believe *me*, it is not.

ROBERT A. NISBET

University of California

Buckley & Vidal

I HAVE SEEN THE COMMENTS published in your November issue concerning the disputes between Gore Vidal and William F. Buckley, Jr., somewhat belatedly; nonetheless I feel the need to express my astonishment at the analysis presented by *R*. No American who witnessed the television debates to which he alludes, or read carefully the essay by Mr. Buckley in *Esquire* could believe that *R* did either. Concerning the *Esquire* piece by Mr. Buckley, the author errs factually when he writes that Mr. Buckley was "proud" of his "part in this affair," or that he "expressed . . . satisfaction" over it. Is it fair not to mention that Mr. Buckley wrote extensively about his distase for the encounter, to explain the provocations that led him to lose his temper, previous efforts to avoid encounters with Vidal and—finally—to apologise for losing his temper? And how strange that *R* should write about Mr. Buckley's "dark references" to Vidal's "family histories," as there were no references at all, dark or light, to Mr. Vidal's family history.

Perhaps your readers should know that Buckley, dismissed by *R* as having reduced "the democratic processes of a Presidential election to an opportunity for the exhibition of personal bile and spleen, without wit, without charm, and without dignity," is the author of seven books, the editor of easily the best journal of conservative opinion in America, author of a thrice-weekly column published in over 300 American newspapers. Apart from his editorial accomplishments, Mr. Buckley is the host/adversary of a weekly television programme, the most serious regularly scheduled television programme in America, which has endured four years and has won a television EMMY Award. Not one of the 200 intellectuals, politicians or public figures (the author of this letter included) who has appeared on this programme has objected to Mr. Buckley's behaviour.

Buckley probably made a mistake in allowing himself to be dragged into debating with Vidal. But it is misleading to use this to dismiss him as guilty of frivolity, and witlessness by association, after the fashion of the revisionist historians who blame England and Germany equally for the last war. Those who have carefully read the accounts of the controversy as published in *Esquire*, will not recognise *R*'s depiction of it.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG

New York City

Yeats and Nietzsche

ERICH HELLER [ENCOUNTER, December] describes Yeats' letter to Lady Gregory, referring to Nietzsche as a "strong enchanter," as having been written in August 1902. This is a month earlier than Allan Wade's tentative dating, 26 September 1902, but Mr. David S. Thatcher (*Notes and Queries*, August 1968) has argued that even this is too early, and that the letter must in fact have been written between 27 December 1902 and 3 January 1903.

J. C. MAXWELL

Balliol College,
Oxford

TRUE, the exact date of Yeats' letter is uncertain. I should have written "probably late in 1902." Still, the little inaccuracy does not matter at all in the context of my story. All the same, thanks for the correction.

ERICH HELLER

Northwestern University

ENCOUNTER Magazine is published in London by Encounter Ltd. (25 Haymarket S.W.1), in association with the International Publishing Corporation (33 Holborn, E.C.1).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HERBERT READ: A Memorial Symposium

Edited by Robin Skelton

For this symposium, Professor Skelton has gathered together original articles, poems and drawings by distinguished writers and artists, including Stephen Spender, Kathleen Raine and Henry Moore, which illustrate the many facets of Sir Herbert Read's life. This volume also includes letters, conversations and photographs; Read's essay, *The Limits of Permissiveness in Art;* and a complete bibliography of his works. 50s

MORE MEMOIRS OF AN AESTHETE

Harold Acton

'. . . Another reason for continuing my *Memoirs* is the crop of reminiscences containing references to myself. Albeit kindly and veracious they crystallize images of forty years ago, as if I were embedded in a glacier. Yet I trust I have moved since then. . . .' Harold Acton.

Sequel to *Memoirs of an Aesthete* (1948): Recollections of famous literary figures and life and travel in China, America and Europe. 65s

Memoirs of an Aesthete

New Edition 65s

METHUEN

AUTHORS

Arthur Koestler's recent books (all published by Hutchinson, London, and Macmillan, New York) include: *Drinkers of Infinity* (1968), *The Ghost in the Machine* (1967) and *The Act of Creation* (1964). In 1968 he organised an inter-disciplinary symposium, the proceedings of which were recently published under the title *Beyond Reductionism—New Perspectives in the Life Sciences.* One of the contributions to the symposium, Viktor E. Frankl's "Reductionism and Nihilism," appeared in the November ENCOUNTER. All of Koestler's works are being republished in the collected "Danube" edition, of which so far eleven volumes are available. . . .

Robert Conquest is both poet and historian. His most recent book of poems, *Arias from a Love Opera,* was published last year by Macmillan. His widely-acclaimed study of Stalin's purges of the 1930s, *The Great Terror,* appeared in 1968 (Macmillan, London, New York). Among his recent contributions to ENCOUNTER are: "The Great Purge" (October 1968) and "Beyond the Moon" (June 1969). . . .

Dr. Henry Miller was formerly Dean of Medicine and Professor of Neurology in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, of which he is now Vice-Chancellor. His widely discussed articles, "In Sickness and in Health" and "New Doctors' Dilemmas" appeared in the April 1967 and March 1969 numbers of ENCOUNTER. . . .

Francis Huxley is an anthropologist. His book, *The Invisibles,* was about voodoo and was published by Rupert Hart-Davis in 1966. . . .

THE PORTRAITS of **Arthur Koestler** and **Natalie Herzen** are by **Jaro Slav,** a young European artist now living in London. His previous illustrations in ENCOUNTER were for the articles by Harold Orlans ("Between Fragmentation and Cohesion," January, pp. 12 and 13) and Melvin J. Lasky "The Birth of a Metaphor," February, p. 34). . . .

Cover design by **Colin Banks** and **John Miles.**

STUDENT SUBSCRIPTION RATES

FULL-TIME students can subscribe to ENCOUNTER at special reduced annual rates. These are: U.K. 63s.; U.S.A. and Canada $10; elsewhere 63s. Please state place and course of study.

MANUSCRIPTS for ENCOUNTER should be sent to 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupons, otherwise they cannot be returned. For subscription details see page 1.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Myselves When Young

FRANK BUDGEN

'His memory is sensitive, his writing witty. . . . As it was for Joyce, so now it is for us: a pleasure to know Mr Budgen.'—William Trevor in *The Guardian* 8 plates 35/-

---

John Donne

A LIFE

R. C. BALD

'Thoroughly readable . . . psychologically acute. . . . It is one of the most attractive major biographies to be published in recent years, and will serve admirably as the foundation of all future interpretations of Donne's life and personality—surely one of the most complex and brilliant in history.'—Martin Seymour-Smith in the *Spectator* 9 plates 70/-

---

The Oxford Chekhov

Translated and edited by

RONALD HINGLEY

VOLUME V, STORIES 1889–1891

This volume contains all Chekhov's fiction first published between 1889 and 1891, a period during which he was beset by many personal problems and in a state of considerable confusion about his responsibilities as a writer. The stories are *A Dreary Story*, *The Duel*, *Gusev*, *The Princess*, *Peasant Women*, and *Thieves*. 42/-

---

Modern Chinese Stories

Selected and edited by **W. J. F. Jenner**

Translated by **W. J. F. Jenner** and **Gladys Yang**

Little contemporary Chinese writing has been published in the West; the twenty stories in this new collection, covering the half-century up to 1963, document profound changes in Chinese life and thought. 12/- *Oxford Paperbacks*

Patterns of Dominance

PHILIP MASON

Philip Mason was Director of the Institute of Race Relations from its foundation in 1958 to the end of last year. In *Patterns of Dominance* he surveys the entire field of race relations, tracing the different forms of man's domination over man in societies throughout the world and throughout history, down to present-day Britain, South Africa, and America. 70/- *Institute of Race Relations*

The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960

MEN, METHODS, AND MYTHS

I. F. NICOLSON

The emphasis in this book is on the administrators: what kind of men they were, what they tried to do, their problems, their successes and failures, and the consequences of their actions. It is an account of able, honest stewardship for the most part, although the author has made a drastic reassessment of the work of Lord Lugard. 1 map 45/-

---

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED